13 a 1

A COLLECTION

OF

THEOLOGICAL TRACTS,

IN SIX VOLUMES.

By RICHARD WATSON, D.D. F.R.S.
LORD BISHOP *of* LANDAFF,
AND
REGIUS PROFESSOR *of* DIVINITY *in the* UNIVERSITY *of* CAMBRIDGE.

VOL. I.

CAMBRIDGE:
Printed by J. ARCHDEACON, Printer to the UNIVERSITY;
for J. & J. MERRILL, Cambridge; T. EVANS, London;
and J. & J. FLETCHER, Oxford.

M. DCC. LXXXV.

A COLLECTION OF THEOLOGICAL TRACTS,

IN SIX VOLUMES.

By RICHARD WATSON, D.D. F.R.S.

LORD BISHOP OF LLANDAFF,

AND

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

VOL. I.

CAMBRIDGE:

Printed by J. ARCHDEACON, Printer to the UNIVERSITY;
for J. & J. MERRILL, Cambridge; T. EVANS, London;
and J. & J. PARKER, Oxford.

M.DCC.LXXXV.

TO THE

QUEEN.

MADAM,

NO original work of mine could possibly have been so deserving of Your Majesty's attention, as this Collection of other men's labours undoubtedly is. Our Infancy is indebted to that Sex, of which Your Majesty is the highest Ornament, for the first principles of Religious Education; and as one of the main objects of this

this publication is—the preſerving Youth from Infidelity—I cannot do the Public a greater ſervice than by requeſting Your Majeſty to give it your protection.

The intereſts of civil Society require that we ſhould pay deference to perſons of Rank, even tho' they happen not to be perſons of Merit. But this is a limited and conſtrained deference; it is paid with reluctance; and is both in kind and extent wholly unlike that which all good Citizens are ambitious of ſhewing to Your Majeſty. My character has hitherto, I truſt, never been eſteemed that of a Flatterer; nor do I fear the imputation of it, in ſaying, That to Your Majeſty's Rank alone I would not have given even this mark, worthleſs as it may ſeem, of my Veneration and Reſpect.

I verily believe Your Majeſty to be one of the beſt Wives, and one of the beſt Mothers in England; the Time is approaching,—diſtant may it be! when the recollection of the example which You have ſhewn to Women of every Rank, in theſe great points of female Duty, (the greateſt on which Women of the higheſt Rank ought to build their worth of character) will give Your Majeſty far more comfort than I can poſſibly deſcribe; but not more than I, in conjunction with

Thouſands

DEDICATION.

Thouſands in every part of the Kingdom, heartily wiſh and pray Your Majeſty may at all times, and eſpecially at that time enjoy.

I am,

MADAM,

With the greateſt

And moſt ſincere Reſpect,

Your MAJESTY's

Moſt obedient Servant,

RICHARD LANDAFF.

CONTENTS

OF THE

FIRST VOLUME.

A Scheme of Scripture-Divinity, formed upon the Plan of the Divine Diſpenſations. With a Vindication of the Sacred Writings. By J. TAYLOR, D.D. *Lond.* 1762. p. 4

This Book deſerves to be generally known; it has been for ſome Years out of Print, and much ſought after by the Clergy: I thought I ſhould do them an acceptable Service in making it a part of this Collection.

Reflexions upon the Books of the Holy Scripture to eſtabliſh the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion. In two Volumes. *Lond.* 1688. By P. ALLIX. p. 220

Theſe two Volumes were publiſhed in French, the Firſt in London, and the Second at Amſterdam, much about the ſame Time that they made their Appearance in Engliſh. They were ſpoken of with Reſpect in the *Acta Eruditorum* for 1688; were tranſlated into German at *Nurenberg* in 1702: and have been always held in great Repute for the Plainneſs and Erudition with which they are written. The Author was a French Refugee of diſtinguiſhed Learning and Integrity; the Reader will meet with a good Account of his Life and Writings in the Biographia Britannica.

CONTENTS

OF THE

FIRST VOLUME.

PREFACE.

IN publishing this Collection of Theological Tracts I have had no other end in view, but to afford young persons of every denomination, and especially to afford the Students in the Universities, and the younger Clergy, an easy opportunity of becoming better acquainted with the grounds and principles of the Christian Religion than, there is reason to apprehend, many of them at present are. My first intention was to have admitted into the Collection, such small tracts only in Latin or English on Theological Subjects as had sunk into unmerited oblivion; but, on maturer reflection, I thought it better to consult the general utility of the younger and less informed Clergy, than to aim at gratifying the curiosity, or improving the understanding of those who were more advanced in years and knowledge. Instead therefore of confining myself to single tracts I have not scrupled to publish some intire books; but they are books of such acknowledged worth, that no Clergyman ought to be unacquainted with their contents, and by making them a part of this Collection, they may chance to engage the attention of many who would otherwise have overlooked them. It would have been an easy matter to have laid down an extensive plan of study for young divines, and to have made a great shew of learning by introducing into it a Systematic Arrangement of Historians, Critics, and Commentators, who, in different ages and in different languages, have employed their talents on Theological Subjects. But there is a fashion in study as in other pursuits; and the taste of the present age is not calculated for the making great exertions in Theological Criticism and Philology. I do not consider the Tracts which are here published as sufficient to make what is called a deep divine, but they will go a great way towards making, what is of more worth—a well informed Christian. In Divinity, perhaps, more than

in any other ſcience, it may be reckoned a virtue *aliqua neſcire*; for what Quinctilian obſerves of hiſtorical, is certainly very applicable to an abundance of Theological writings.——*Perſequi quidem quod quiſque umquam vel contemptiſſimorum hominum dixerit, aut nimiæ miſeriæ, aut inanis jactantiæ eſt: et detinet atque obruit Ingenia, melius aliis vacatura.*

If any thing can revive a ſenſe of Religion in the higher claſſes of life, preſerve what ſtill remains of it amongſt men of middling fortunes, and bring back to decency of manners and the fear of God, the loweſt of the people, it muſt be——the Zeal of the Clergy. But Zeal, in order to produce its proper effect, muſt be founded in knowledge: it will otherwiſe (where, from ſome peculiar temperament of body or mind, it happens to exiſt at all,) be unſteady in its operation; it will be counteracted by the prejudices of the world, the ſuggeſtions of ſelf intereſt, the importunities of indolent habits, or it will be tainted by Fanaticiſm, and inſtead of producing in every individual ſober thoughts of his Chriſtian duty, it will hurry into dangerous errors the ignorant and unthinking, and excite the abhorrence or deriſion of men of ſenſe. I have therefore, in ſelecting the works which compoſe this publication, not ſo much attended to the diſcuſſion of particular doctrines, as to the general arguments which are beſt adapted to produce in the Clergy, and in others who will conſider them, a well-grounded perſuaſion that Chriſtianity is not a *cunningly deviſed fable, but the power of God unto ſalvation to every one that believeth.* That Clergyman who is a Chriſtian, not becauſe he happens to have been born in a Chriſtian country, but from rational conviction, will never think himſelf at liberty to make light of his calling; to ſuit his inſtructions to the vicious propenſities of his audience; to ſcandalize his profeſſion by a conformity with the ungodly faſhions of the world; to be aſhamed of the Croſs of Chriſt, though he ſhould ſee it attacked by the ſubtlety of Sophiſts, or ridiculed by the wanton audacity of profane men. A deficiency of Zeal indeed in religious concerns does not always proceed, either in the Clergy or Laity, from a want of Knowledge: ſenſual appetites, ungoverned paſſions, worldly cuſtoms all combine together in making moſt men languid in the performance of even clear and acknowledged duties; yet it muſt be confeſſed, that a firm belief in the truth of Chriſtianity reſulting from a comprehenſive view of the proofs by which it is eſtabliſhed, is the moſt probable mean of producing in all men integrity of life, and of animating, eſpecially, the Miniſters of the Goſpel, to a zealous and diſcreet diſcharge of their paſtoral functions.

Young

Young men who are ordained from Country Schools are frequently, when ſettled in their Curacies, at a loſs what courſe of ſtudies to purſue: and many of them, as well as many of thoſe who have had the benefit of an Univerſity Education, are unhappily in no condition to expend much money in the purchaſe of Theological books, even if they knew how to make a proper ſelection. Both theſe difficulties are, I hope, in ſome degree obviated by this publication; which contains nearly as much matter as three times the number of ordinary volumes of the ſame ſize; and the matter itſelf has been taken from Authors of ſuch eſtabliſhed reputation; that he who will take the pains to read and digeſt what is here offered to him, will have acquired no inconſiderable knowledge in Divinity. But in Divinity, as in every other ſtudy, a man muſt think much for himſelf: thoſe who have gone before in the ſame purſuit may point out the road to him, but that is the main good they can do him; if he loiters in his progreſs, waiting for the vigilance of others to puſh him on, he will never get to his journey's end. The Lectures of Profeſſors and Tutors are doubtleſs of great uſe in every ſcience, but their uſe does not conſiſt ſo much in rendering the ſcience intelligible, if we except the firſt Elements of the abſtract Sciences, as in directing the attention of the Students to the beſt books on every ſubject; and if to this they add a frequent examination into the progreſs which the Students have made, they will have done all that reaſonably can be expected from them. The Republic of Letters is in very different circumſtances in the preſent age from what it was three centuries ago: the multiplicity of books which, in the courſe of that period, have been publiſhed in every Art and Science, has enlarged the boundaries of knowledge, and given every man an opportunity, if he be not wanting to himſelf, of becoming ſkilled in that branch of Literature which he ſhall think fit to cultivate. And to ſpeak the truth, though there may be ſome dark points in Divinity which the labour of Learning may ſtill illuſtrate, yet new books are not ſo much wanted in that Science, as inclination in the younger Clergy to explore the treaſures of the old ones.

A young man deſtined to the Church, who thinks that he has completed his Education as ſoon as he has taken his firſt degree in Arts, and quitted the walls of his College, is under a very great miſtake. His memory may have been ſtocked with a great abundance of Claſſical Knowledge; his mind may have been expanded by a general acquaintance with the ſeveral branches of Natural Philoſophy; his reaſoning faculties may have been

ſtrengthened by Mathematical Reſearches; the limits of his underſtanding may have been in ſome degree aſcertained by the ſtudy of Natural Religion; in a word, he may have been admirably fitted to become a Divine; but, if, after this preparation, he ſtops ſhort, giving himſelf up to rural amuſements, miſſpending his time in idle avocations, blunting his faculties by ſenſual indulgencies, indolently or arrogantly acquieſcing in the knowledge he has acquired, he will never be one.

I am far from wiſhing to divert the attention of the Undergraduates from that courſe of ſtudies which is eſtabliſhed in this place. There is no Univerſity, I believe, in Europe, where the degree of Bachelor of Arts is more honorably obtained than in the Univerſity of Cambridge: the ſedulity with which the young men, in general, purſue the plan of ſtudy which is preſcribed to them is highly commendable; and, if I recommend it to them to let Theology make a part of that plan, it is not from an opinion, that Theological ſtudies are more proper for their time of life than any of thoſe in which they are engaged, but from an apprehenſion, that if they do not make ſome progreſs in Divinity, during the firſt years of their Academical Education, they will have no opportunity of doing it before they will be placed in ſituations, which require a great proficiency in it. The Statutes indeed of the Univerſity, and of many private Colleges, though they point out Theology as the ultimate End of all our ſtudies, do not order us to ſtudy Divinity till we have ſtudied almoſt every other branch of Science: but it ought to be remembered that, at the time theſe Statutes were made, young men were admitted into the Univerſity about the age of fourteen, and conſequently commencing Maſters of Arts about the age of twenty-one, they had a conſiderable interval, even after taking their ſecond degree in Arts, in which they might prepare themſelves for entering into holy Orders.

It is not the reading many books which makes a man a Divine, but the reading a few of the beſt books often over, and with attention; thoſe at leaſt who are beginning their Theological ſtudies ſhould follow this rule. I have no ſcruple therefore in recommending it to the Students in the Univerſities to read this Collection twice or thrice over before they take their firſt degree; the doing this will give little interruption to their other ſtudies, and if it ſhould give a great deal, their time will not be miſemployed. Let them dedicate a ſmall portion of every day, or the whole of every Sunday to this occupation, and, in the courſe of three or four years, they will eaſily accompliſh the taſk, and, when

it

it is accompliſhed, they may offer themſelves to the Biſhops to be ordained with a becoming confidence, that they are not wholly unprepared; and they may undertake the moſt important of all human Duties——the Cure of Souls——without being alarmed by a conſciouſneſs of their inability to diſcharge it as becometh *the ſervants of the moſt high God.* When I thus expreſs myſelf concerning the fruits which may be expected from the courſe of ſtudy here pointed out, I am far from inſinuating, that it will ſuperſede the neceſſity of ſtudying the Scriptures themſelves, with the beſt aſſiſtance which can be obtained from Commentators. On the contrary, I am perſuaded that one part of Scripture is beſt interpreted by another, and that no ſort of reading can contribute ſo much to the producing of a ſteady faith, a rational piety, a true Chriſtian charity of mind (the great ends of all our ſtudies and all our purſuits!) as the frequent reading of the Scriptures.

But the ſtudents who are deſigned for the Church are not the only ones to whom I would recommend the practice of ſetting apart ſome portion of their time for religious inquiries; I would preſs it with the greateſt earneſtneſs and ſincerity on the young men of rank and fortune. I would eſpecially intreat them to peruſe with unprejudiced minds, the whole of this Collection; but particularly, and with the ſtricteſt attention, the Firſt, Fourth, and Fifth Volumes of it: they will there find ſuch convincing proofs of the Chriſtian Religion, as will preſerve them, I truſt, from that contagion of Infidelity which is the diſgrace of the age. It is a very wonderful thing that a being ſuch as man, placed on a little globe of earth in a little corner of the univerſe, cut off from all communication with the other ſyſtems which are diſperſed through the immenſity of ſpace, impriſoned as it were on the ſpot where he happens to be born, almoſt utterly ignorant of the variety of ſpiritual exiſtencies, and circumſcribed in his knowledge of material things, by their remoteneſs, magnitude, or minuteneſs, a ſtranger to the nature of the very pebbles on which he treads, unacquainted, or but very obſcurely informed by his natural faculties of his condition after death; it is wonderful that a being ſuch as this, ſhould reluctantly receive, or faſtidiouſly reject the inſtruction of the Eternal God! Or, if this is ſaying too much, that he ſhould haſtily, and negligently, and triumphantly conclude, that the Supreme Being never had condeſcended to inſtruct the race of man. It might properly have been expected, that a rational being, ſo circumſtanced, would have ſeduloufly inquired into a ſubject of ſuch vaſt importance; that he would not

have

have ſuffered himſelf to have been diverted from the inveſtigation, by the purſuits of wealth, or honour, or any temporal concern; much leſs by notions taken up without attention, arguments admitted without examination, or prejudices imbibed in early youth from the profane ridicule, or impious jeſtings, of ſenſual and immoral men. It is from the influence of ſuch prejudices that I would guard that part of the riſing generation which is committed to our care, by recommending to them a ſerious perusal of the tracts which are here preſented to them. Let them not refuſe to follow this advice, becauſe it is given to them by a churchman; he can have no poſſible intereſt in giving it, except what may reſult to him from the conſciouſneſs of endeavouring to diſcharge his duty, and the hope of being ſerviceable to them in this world and the next. They need not queſtion his veracity, when he ſpeaks of religion as being ſerviceable to them in this world; for it is a trite objection, and grounded on a miſapprehenſion of the deſign of Chriſtianity, which would repreſent it as an intolerable yoke, ſo oppoſite to the propenſities, as to be utterly deſtructive of the felicity of the human mind. It is in truth, quite the reverſe; there is not a ſingle precept in the Goſpel, without excepting either that which ordains the forgiveneſs of injuries, or that which commands every one *to poſſeſs his veſſel in ſanctification and honour*, which is not calculated to promote our happineſs. Chriſtianity regulates, but does not extinguiſh our affections; and in the due regulation of our affections conſiſts our happineſs as reaſonable beings. If there is one condition in this life more happy than another, it is, ſurely, that of him, who founds all his hopes of futurity on the promiſes of the Goſpel; who carefully endeavours to conform his actions to its precepts; looking upon the great God Almighty as his Protector here, his Rewarder hereafter, and his everlaſting Preſerver. This is a frame of mind ſo perfective of our nature, that if Chriſtianity, from a belief of which it can only be derived, was as certainly falſe, as it is certainly true, one could not help wiſhing that it might be univerſally received in the world. Unbelievers attempt to make proſelytes to Infidelity, by preſſing upon the minds of the unlearned in Scripture knowledge, the authorities of *Bolingbroke*, *Voltaire*, *Helvetius*, *Hume*, and other Deiſtical writers. It is proper that young men ſhould be furniſhed with a ready anſwer to arguments in favour of Infidelity, which are taken from the high literary characters of thoſe who profeſs it; let them remember then, that *Bacon*, *Boyle*, *Newton*, *Grotius*, *Locke*, *Euler* —that *Addiſon*, *Hartley*, *Haller*, *Weſt*, *Jenyns*——that Lords *Nottingham*,

Nottingham, King, Barrington, Lyttleton with an hundred other *laymen*, who were ſurely as eminent for their literary attainments in every kind of ſcience as either Bolingbroke or Voltaire, were profeſſed *believers* of Chriſtianity. I am quite aware that the truth of Chriſtianity cannot be eſtabliſhed by authorities, but neither can its falſehood be ſo eſtabliſhed. Arguments *ad verecundiam* have little weight with thoſe who know how to uſe any others, but they have weight with the lazy and the ignorant on both ſides of the queſtion. But though I have here ſuggeſted to young men, a ready anſwer to ſuch of their profligate acquaintance as may wiſh to work upon their *prejudices* in favour of Infidelity; yet I hope they will not content themſelves with being *prejudiced* even in favour of Chriſtianity; they will find in this Collection, ſuch ſolid arguments in ſupport of its truth, as cannot fail to confirm them, on the moſt rational grounds, in the belief of the Goſpel Diſpenſation. They may wonder, perhaps, if religion be ſo uſeful a thing as is here repreſented, that their parents ſhould have ſeldom or never converſed with them on the ſubject——if this ſhould be the fact, I can only ſay, That it is a neglect of all others the moſt to be regretted. And indeed our mode of education, as to religious knowledge, is very defective; the child is inſtructed in its catechiſm before it is able to comprehend its meaning, and that is uſually all the domeſtic inſtruction which it ever receives. But whatever may be the negligence of parents in teaching their children Chriſtianity, or how forcibly ſoever the maxims and cuſtoms of the world may conſpire in confirming men in infidelity, it is the duty of thoſe to whom the Education of youth is intruſted not to deſpair; their diligence will have its uſe; it will prevent a bad matter from becoming worſe: and if this *fooliſhneſs of preaching* into which I have been betrayed on this occaſion, has but the effect of making even one young man of fortune examine into the truth of the Chriſtian Religion, who would not otherwiſe have done it, I ſhall not repent the having been *inſtant out of ſeaſon*.

Diſcite, O Miſeri, et cauſas cognoſcite rerum
Quid ſumus, et quidnam victuri gignimur: ordo
Quis datus, &c——quem te Deus eſſe
Juſſit.

Theſe were queſtions which even the Heathen Moraliſts thought it a ſhame for a man never to have conſidered. How much more cenſurable are thoſe amongſt ourſelves who waſte their days in folly

folly or vice, without ever reflecting upon the providential diſpenſation under which they live, without having any ſublimer piety, any purer morality, any better hopes of futurity than the Heathens had?

In recommending this Collection to the careful peruſal of the younger Clergy, I would not be underſtood to vouch for the truth of every opinion which is contained in it; by no means; there is no certainty of truth but in the word of God. Their Bible is the only ſure foundation upon which they ought to build every article of the faith which they profeſs, every point of doctrine which they teach. All other foundations, whether they be the deciſions of councils, the confeſſions of churches, the preſcripts of popes, or the expoſitions of private men, ought to be conſidered by them as ſandy and unſafe, as in no wiſe fit to be ultimately relied on. Nor, on the other hand, are they to be faſtidiouſly rejected as of no uſe; for though the Bible be the one infallible rule by which we muſt meaſure the truth or falſehood of every religious opinion, yet all men are not equally fitted to apply this rule, and the wiſeſt men want on many occaſions all the helps of human learning to enable them to underſtand its preciſe nature, and to define its certain extent. Theſe helps are great and numerous, they have been ſupplied in every age, ſince the death of Chriſt, by the united labours of learned men in every country where his religion has been received. Great Britain has not been backward in her endeavours to eſtabliſh the truth, and to illuſtrate the doctrines of Chriſtianity: ſhe has not abounded ſo much in ſyſtematic Divines as Germany and Holland have done; yet the moſt difficult points of Theology have been as well diſcuſſed by our Engliſh Divines as by thoſe of any other nation. In proof of this, I might mention the works of Pearſon, Mede, Barrow, Burnet, Chillingworth, Stillingfleet, Clarke, Tillotſon, Taylor, Benſon, Jortin, Secker, and an hundred others; but the ſermons preached at Boyle's Lecture, and the Collection of Tracts againſt Popery, render every other argument in ſupport of the Obſervation wholly unneceſſary. The freedom of enquiry too, which has ſubſiſted in this country during the preſent century, has eventually been of great ſervice to the cauſe of Chriſtianity. It muſt be acknowledged that the works of our Deiſtical writers have made ſome few converts to Infidelity at home, and that they have furniſhed the *Eſprits forts* of France, and the *Frey-Geiſters* of Germany, with every material objection to our Religion, which they have of late years diſplayed with much affectation of originality; but at the ſame time we muſt needs allow,

that

that theſe works have ſtimulated ſome diſtinguiſhed characters amongſt the Laity, and many amongſt the Clergy, to exert their talents in removing ſuch difficulties in the Chriſtian ſyſtem, as would otherwiſe be likely to perplex the unlearned, to ſhipwreck the faith of the unſtable, and to induce a reluctant ſcepticiſm into the minds of the moſt ſerious and beſt intentioned. Some difficulties ſtill remain, and it would be a miracle greater than any we are inſtructed to believe, if there remained none; if a being with but five ſcanty inlets of knowledge, ſeparated but yeſterday from his mother Earth, and to-day ſinking again into her boſom, could fathom the depths of the wiſdom and knowledge of *Him which is, which was, and which is to come,——the Lord God Almighty, to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever.*

We live in a diſſolute but enlightened age; the reſtraints of our Religion are ill ſuited to the profligacy of our manners, and men are ſoon induced to believe that ſyſtem to be falſe, which they wiſh to find ſo: that knowledge, moreover, which ſpurns with contempt the illuſions of fanaticiſm and the tyranny of ſuperſtition, is often unhappily miſemployed, in magnifying every little difficulty attending the proof of the truth of Chriſtianity, into an irrefragable argument of its falſehood. The Chriſtian Religion has nothing to apprehend from the ſtricteſt inveſtigation of the moſt learned of its adverſaries; it ſuffers only from the miſconceptions of ſcioliſts, and ſilly pretenders to ſuperior wiſdom; a little learning is far more dangerous to the faith of thoſe who poſſeſs it than ignorance itſelf. Some, I know, affect to believe, that as the reſtoration of letters was ruinous to the Romiſh Religion, ſo the further cultivation of them will be ſubverſive of Chriſtianity itſelf. Of this there is no danger, it may be ſubverſive of the Reliques of the Church of Rome by which other churches are ſtill polluted, of perſecutions, of anathemas, of eccleſiaſtical domination over God's heritage, of all the ſilly outworks which the pride, the ſuperſtition, the knavery of mankind have erected around the citadel of our faith; but the citadel itſelf is founded on a rock, the gates of hell cannot prevail againſt it, its maſter-builder is God, its beauty will be found ineffable, and its ſtrength impregnable when it ſhall be freed from the frippery of human ornaments, cleared from the rubbiſh of human bulwarks. It is no ſmall part of the province of a teacher of Chriſtianity to diſtinguiſh between the word of God and the additions which men have made to it. The objections of unbelievers are frequently levelled againſt what is not

Chriſtianity,

Chriſtianity, but mere human ſyſtem; and he will be beſt able to defend the former who is leaſt ſtudious to ſupport the airy pretenſions of the latter. The effect of eſtabliſhed ſyſtems in obſtructing truth is to the laſt degree deplorable, every one ſees it in other churches, but ſcarcely any one ſuſpects it in his own. *Calvin*, I queſtion not, thought it almoſt impoſſible that the Scriptures could ever have been ſo far perverted as to afford the *Romaniſts* any handle for their doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation, or that the underſtanding of any human being could have been ſo far debaſed, or rather ſo utterly annihilated, as to believe in it for a moment: yet this ſame *Calvin* followed St. *Auguſtine* in the doctrine of abſolute perſonal reprobation and election, inculcating it as a fundamental article of faith, with nearly the ſame unchriſtian zeal which infatuated him when he faſtened *Servetus* to the ſtake. A thouſand inſtances of this blind attachment to ſyſtem might be taken from the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory of every century; indeed the whole of it is little more, than the hiſtory of the ſtruggles of different ſects to overturn the ſyſtems of others, in order to build up their own, and the great leſſon which every ſect, and every individual of every ſect, ought to learn from its peruſal is——Moderation. Want of genuine moderation towards thoſe who differ from us in religious opinions ſeems to be the moſt unaccountable thing in the world. Every man, who has any religion at all, feels within himſelf a ſtronger motive to judge right, than you can poſſibly ſuggeſt to him; and, if he judges wrong, What is that to you? To his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth, his wrong judgment may affect his own ſalvation, it cannot affect your's; for, in the words of *Tertullian*——*nec alii obeſt aut prodeſt alterius religio*: this you muſt admit, unleſs you think it your duty to inſtruct him; but inſtruction may be given with moderation, and, conſidering that the Bible is as open to him as it is to you, you ought not to be over certain that it is your duty to preſs your inſtruction upon him; For what is, ordinarily ſpeaking, your inſtruction, but an attempt to bring him over to your opinion? This principle ſhould be received with great caution, or it may do much miſchief; for it is on this principle that the Roman Catholics light up the fires of the inquiſition, and compaſs ſea and land to make a proſelyte——a proſelyte! to what we Proteſtants believe to be the deluſion of Satan, the very canker of Chriſtianity, the grand apoſtacy from the Goſpel foretold by St. *Paul*. The Catholics however in this point act conſiſtently; for, believing in the infallibility of their church, they have a plea for

their

their zeal in bringing every one within its pale, which can never be urged by Proteſtants with any ſhadow of juſtice, and propriety.

There are many queſtions in Divinity, in the inveſtigating of which the mind fluctuates with an irkſome uncertainty, unable to perceive ſuch a preponderance of argument as will warrant it in embracing as true, either the one ſide or the other. This heſitation ariſes, in many caſes, from our not underſtanding the full meaning of the language, be it common, or figurative, in which a doctrine is revealed; in ſome it proceeds from our attempting to apprehend definitely, what is expreſſed indeterminately, or clearly what God hath not thought proper clearly to reveal; in others it is to be attributed to an indeciſion of temper, to which ſome men are peculiarly ſubject; but let it originate from what cauſe it may, it is far more tolerable than an arrogant temerity of judgment. A ſuſpicion of fallibility would have been an uſeful principle to the profeſſors of Chriſtianity in every age; it would have choaked the ſpirit of perſecution in its birth; and have rendered not only the church of Rome, but every church in Chriſtendom, more ſhy of aſſuming to itſelf the proud title of Orthodox, and of branding every other with the opprobrious one of Heterodox, than any of them have hitherto been. There are, you will ſay, doubtleſs ſome fundamental doctrines in Chriſtianity.——*Paul* the Apoſtle has laid down one foundation, and he tells us that, *other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is, Jeſus*——*The Chriſt*.——But this propoſition——Jeſus is the Meſſiah——includes, you will reply, ſeveral others which are equally true. I acknowledge that it does ſo, and it is every man's duty to ſearch the Scriptures that he may know what thoſe truths are; but I do not conceive it to be any man's duty, to anathematize thoſe who cannot ſubſcribe to *his* catalogue of fundamental Chriſtian verities. That man is not to be eſteemed an *Atheiſt*, who acknowledges the exiſtence of a God the Creator of the univerſe; though he cannot aſſent to all the *truths* of natural religion, which *other* men may undertake to deduce from that principle: nor is he to be eſteemed a *Deiſt*, who acknowledges that Jeſus of Nazareth *is indeed the Chriſt, the Saviour of the world*, though he cannot aſſent to all the *truths* of revealed religion which *other* men may think themſelves warranted in deducing from thence. Still you will probably rejoin, there muſt be many truths in the Chriſtian religion concerning which no one ought to heſitate, inaſmuch as without a belief in them he cannot be reputed a Chriſtian.——reputed! By whom? By

Jeſus

Jeſus Chriſt his Lord and his God, or by you?——raſh expoſitors of points of doubtful diſputation; intolerant fabricators of metaphyſical Creeds, and incongruous Syſtems of Theology! Do you undertake to meaſure the extent of any man's underſtanding except your own; to eſtimate the ſtrength and origin of his habits of thinking; to appreciate his merit or demerit in the uſe of the talent which God has given him; ſo as unerringly to pronounce that the belief of this or that doctrine is neceſſary to his ſalvation? It is undoubtedly neceſſary to your's, if you are perſuaded that it comes from God; but you take too much upon you, when you erect yourſelf into an infallible judge of truth and falſehood. We as Chriſtians are under no uncertainty as to the being of a God; as to his moral government of the world; as to the terms on which ſinners may be reconciled to him; as to *the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt*; as to a reſurrection from the dead; as to a future ſtate of retribution; nor with reſpect to other important queſtions concerning which the wiſeſt of the Heathen Philoſophers were either wholly ignorant, or had no ſettled notions. But there are other ſubjects on which the *Academicorum ἐποχὴ* may be admitted, I apprehend, without injuring the foundations of our Religion. Such are the queſtions which relate to the power of Evil Spirits to ſuſpend the laws of nature, or to actuate the minds of men; to the materiality or immateriality of the human ſoul; the ſtate of the dead before the general reſurrection; the reſurrection of the ſame body; the duration of future puniſhments, and many others of the ſame kind. Some one will think that I here ſpeak too freely, and accuſe me, probably, as an encourager of ſceptical and latitudinarian principles. ——What! Shall the church of Chriſt never be freed from the narrow-minded contentions of bigots; from the inſults of men who know not what ſpirit they are of, when they would ſtint the Omnipotent in the exerciſe of his mercy, and bar the doors of heaven againſt every ſect but their own? Shall we never learn to think more humbly of ourſelves and leſs deſpicably of others? To believe that the Father of the univerſe accommodates not his judgments to the wretched wranglings of pedantic Theologues, but that every one, who with an honeſt intention, and to the beſt of his ability ſeeketh the truth, whether he findeth it or not, and worketh righteouſneſs, will be accepted of him? I have no regard for latitudinarian principles, nor for any principles but the principles of Truth; and Truth every man muſt endeavour to inveſtigate for himſelf; and, ordinarily ſpeaking, he will be moſt

ſucceſsful in his endeavours, who examines, with candour and care, what can be urged on each ſide of a greatly controverted queſtion. This ſort of examination may, in ſome inſtances, produce a doubt, an heſitation, a diffident ſuſpenſion of judgment, but it will at the ſame time produce mutual forbearance and good temper towards thoſe who differ from us; our charity will be enlarged, as our underſtanding is improved. Partial examination is the parent of pertinacity of opinion, and a froward propenſity to be angry with thoſe who queſtion the validity of our principles, or deny the juſtneſs of our concluſions, in any matter reſpecting philoſophy, policy, or religion, is an infallible mark of prejudice; of our having grounded our opinions on faſhion, fancy, intereſt; on the unexamined tenets of our family, ſect, or party, on any thing rather than on the ſolid foundation of cool and diſpaſſionate reaſoning,——*Iliacos intra muros peccatur et extra*—— Churchmen as well as Diſſenters, and diſſenters as well as churchmen are apt to give a degree of aſſent to opinions beyond what they can give a reaſon for; this is the very eſſence of prejudice: it is difficult for any man intirely to diveſt himſelf of all prejudice, but he may ſurely take care that it be not accompanied with an uncharitable propenſity to ſtigmatize with reproachful appellations, thoſe who cannot meaſure the rectitude of the Divine diſpenſations by his rule, nor ſeek their way to heaven, by inſiſting on the path which he, in his overweening wiſdom, has arrogantly preſcribed as the only one which can lead men thither.

This intolerant ſpirit has abated much of its violence in the courſe of this century amongſt ourſelves; we pray to God that it may be utterly extinguiſhed in every part of Chriſtendom, and that the true ſpirit of Chriſtianity, which is the ſpirit of meekneſs, peace, and love, may be introduced in its ſtead. If different men, in carefully and conſcientiouſly examining the Scriptures, ſhould arrive at different concluſions, even on points of the laſt importance; we truſt that God, who alone knows what every man is capable of, will be merciful to him that is in error. We truſt that he will pardon the Unitarian, if he be in an error, becauſe he has fallen into it from the dread of becoming an Idolater, of giving that glory to another which he conceives to be due to God alone. If the worſhipper of Jeſus Chriſt be in an error, we truſt that God will pardon his miſtake, becauſe he has fallen into it from a dread of diſobeying what he conceives to be *revealed* concerning the *nature* of the Son, or *commanded* concerning the *honour* to be given him. Both are actuated by the ſame principle—THE FEAR

OF GOD; and, though that principle impells them into different roads, it is our hope and belief that, if they add to their faith charity, they will meet in heaven.——If any one thinks differently on the ſubject, I will have no contention with him; for I feel no diſpoſition to proſelyte others to any opinion of mine: eſteeming it a duty to ſpeak what I think, I have no ſcruple in doing that; but to do more is to affect a tyranny over other men's minds; it is to encounter not only the reaſon, but the paſſions, prejudices, and intereſts of mankind; it is to engage in a conflict in which Chriſtian charity ſeldom eſcapes unhurt on either ſide.

Too much pains cannot be taken by the Clergy in examining the external and internal evidences of the truth of the Goſpel, in order that they may generate in their own minds a full conviction of the unſpeakable importance of the work in which they are engaged; but that conviction being once produced, their time will be far more uſefully employed in diſcharging their paſtoral office with fidelity, than in weighing the importance of all the diſcordant ſyſtems of faith, which have in different ages and countries, not merely occupied the attention of Schoolmen and Monks, but unſheathed the ſwords of princes, and polluted the temple of *Chriſt* with more blood than was ever ſhed on the altars of *Moloch*, or in honour of *Vitzliliputzli* the God of *Mexico*. Happily for our age this ſpirit of perſecution is well nigh extinguiſhed; for notwithſtanding the ſad fate of the *Calas* family in France; notwithſtanding the demon of fanaticiſm which ſpread its deluſion over London and Edinburgh on the relaxation of the laws againſt Popery; notwithſtanding the burning zeal of a few furious bigots amongſt every ſect of Chriſtians; ſtill may we foretel, from obſerving *the ſigns of the times*, that the æra is approaching very faſt, when Theological Acrimony ſhall be ſwallowed up in Evangelical Charity, and a liberal toleration become the diſtinguiſhing feature of every church in Chriſtendom. The ruling powers in Proteſtant and Catholic ſtates begin at length every where to perceive, that an uniformity of ſentiment in matters of religion is a circumſtance impoſſible to be obtained; that it has never yet exiſted in the church of Chriſt, from the Apoſtolic age to our own; and they begin to be aſhamed of the fines, confiſcations, impriſonments, tortures, of all the unjuſt and ſanguinary efforts which they have ſeverally made uſe of to procure it. They perceive too that a diverſity in religious opinions may ſubſiſt among the ſubjects of the ſame ſtate, without endangering the common weal; and they begin to think it reaſonable, that

no

no man ſhould be abridged in the exerciſe of natural rights, merely on the ſcore of Religion. Theſe enlarged ſentiments proceed not, I would willingly hope, from what the Germans have called *Indifferentiſm* in Religion; but partly from a perfect knowledge of its true end, which is Charity; and partly from that conſciouſneſs of intellectual weakneſs, which is ever moſt conſpicuous in minds the moſt enlightened, and which, wherever it ſubſiſts, puts a ſtop to dogmatiſm and intolerance of every kind.

The Books and Tracts which I have here printed are all of them ſo well known, that there is little need to give a long account of any of them. I have choſen them out of a great variety which ſuggeſted themſelves to my mind, but I have no expectation that every one ſhould be pleaſed with the choice which I have made. I once knew a Divine of the Church of England, of great eminence in it, and deſervedly eſteemed a good Scholar, who having accidentally taken up, in a friend's apartment, a book written by a Diſſenter, haſtily laid it down again, declaring that "he never read diſſenting Divinity." I ought to apologize to Men of this Gentleman's Opinion, for having made ſo much uſe of the works of the Diſſenters in this Collection; but the truth is, I did not at all conſider the quarter from whence the matter was taken, but whether it was good, and ſuited to my purpoſe; it was a circumſtance of utter indifference to me, whether it was of *Paul*, or *Apollos*, or *Cephas*, provided it was of *Chriſt*.

As this Collection will probably fall into the hands of ſome, who may wiſh to become acquainted with the ſort of Queſtions, which are uſually maintained by thoſe who proceed to the degree of Bachelor or Doctor in Divinity; I thought it might be of ſervice to them, if I put down a few of thoſe which have been publicly diſputed on in the Theological Schools at Cambridge within the laſt twenty-five or thirty years. I have not obſerved much order in arranging the queſtions: the reader will remark, that they are not all of equal importance: and, what he may judge more extraordinary, he will perceive, that the ſame doctrine is not maintained in them all. With regard to their importance, that muſt be expected to be variable, as they have been propoſed by men of very different talents and judgments. A ſameneſs of doctrine might indeed have been ſecured by the Profeſſor, without whoſe approbation no queſtion can be propoſed for diſputation: but I, for my part, (though ſome will probably blame me for it) have thought it more liberal and reaſonable to ſuffer this

contrariety, in ſome inſtances, to take place, than to oblige men to ſupport what they did not believe, or to preclude them from ſupporting what they did believe to be revealed in the Scriptures. Truth, I hope, has not ſuffered from this conduct: the mere acceptance of a queſtion is not underſtood to lay the Profeſſor under any obligation to ſupport it in the diſputation; if he thinks it not founded in the word of God, it is his duty to endeavour to ſhew the Reſpondent wherein he is miſtaken; and if he be not able to do that, ſtill there is no fear of error being eſtabliſhed by his inability to detect it, when it is conſidered before what a learned audience the diſputation is held; that the Reſpondent muſt either be a Bachelor of Divinity or a Maſter of Arts of four years ſtanding; and that three Maſters of Arts are the regular Opponents at every Divinity Act.

QUÆSTIONES QUÆDAM THEOLOGICÆ IN ACADEMIA CANTABRIGIENSI,

AB ANNO 1755 USQUE AD ANN. 1785;

Publicè diſputatæ ſub Preſidio S. Theologiæ Profeſſorum Reg.

THOMÆ RUTHERFORTH, RICARDI WATSON.

QUÆS.

1 NON fuit Deo indignum mortis pœna ſancire, ne primi hominum generis parentes unius cujuſdam arboris fructu veſcerentur.

2 Quod genus humanum ſit laboribus et morti ſubjectum propter Adami peccatum, docetur in ſacra pagina, nec eſt rationi contrarium.

3 Lapſum olim fuiſſe Angelorum patet ex ſacris literis.

4 Verus erat ſerpens, per quem Eva decepta fuit; ſed facultatibus, quæ ipſi non eſſent naturaliter inſitæ, utebatur.

5 Univerſus ſerpentum cultus apud Gentiles ad confirmandam generalem interpretationem Diaboli ſub ſerpentis forma latentis, prout in ſacris Scripturis traditur, apte convenit atque inde derivari videtur.

6 Præſcientia divina non erat cauſa lapſûs Adami.

7 Peccatum originis non eſt in imitatione Adami ſitum, ſed eſt vitium et depravatio naturæ cujuſlibet hominis ab Adamo propagati.

8 Lapſus Adami humanam naturam ad peccatum procliviorem reddidit.

9 Chriſtus ante erat quam humana natura ab eo induebatur.

10 Non fuit indignum Filio Dei, hominum generis redimendi cauſa, humanam naturam induere.

11 Sacrificia Juſſu Dei principio ſunt conſtituta.

12 Sacrificia principio conſtituta ſunt ut eſſent typi mortis Chriſti.

13 Remiſſio peccatorum per Mediatorem et Sacrificium vicarium haud Deo eſt indigna.

14 Satisfactio pro peccatis hominum per mortem Chriſti non repugnat rationi.

15 Chriſtum ipſum inſontem, a Deo ad mortem datum eſſe pro ſontibus, eſt credibile.

16 Quod traditur in ſacris Scripturis de lapſu, redemptione, et futuro ſtatu humani generis non contradicit divinis perfectionibus.

17 Chriſtiana revelatio rationis inventa ſuperat rerum divinarum numero et certitudine.

18 Ratio ſola nullam poteſt invenire conditionem, qua Deus velit hominibus dare peccatorum veniam et impunitatem.

19 Mors Chriſti eſt propria et plena ſatisfactio pro peccatis hominum.
20 Chriſtus pro omnibus eſt mortuus.
21 Opera juſtorum vitam æternam per ſe non merentur.
22 Juſtitia Chriſti non ſic hominibus imputatur, ut Dei judicio, ipſi cenſeantur eam præſtitiſſe.
23 Coram Deo homo reputatur juſtus non propter meritum ſuum, ſed propter meritum Jeſu Chriſti, per fidem in ejus nomine.
24 Neque docent ſacræ Scripturæ, neque articuli Eccleſiæ Anglicanæ, Chriſti juſtitiam nobis imputari in juſtificationem, ſed fidem ſolam.
25 Paulus et Jacobus, quanquam de hominum juſtificatione verbis diſcrepare videantur, ſententiis tamen non diſcrepant.
26 Juſtificatio nec ſine fide et pœnitentia poteſt comparari, nec ſine fidei et pœnitentiæ fructibus conſervari.
27 Sacræ Scripturæ nullibi docent homines per fidem ſolam, bonorum operum fructibus carentem, ſupremo die juſtificandos.
28 Non eſt ea religionis Chriſti ratio, ut omnibus qui per eam juſti apud Chriſtum habeantur, certa ſalutis conſequendæ fiducia in hac vita ingeneretur.
29 Fides Chriſtiana nec cum ab hominibus ſuſcipiatur, nec poſtquam ſuſcepta ſit rationis uſum aſpernatur.
30 Fuit Moſes verus Propheta a Deo miſſus.
31 Non fuit a Dei natura alienum Iſraelitas in populum ſibi peculiarem eligere.
32 Moſes ſpem vitæ æternæ Iſraelitis oſtendit.
33 Diſtributio præmiorum et pœnarum temporalium quæ promiſſa fuit in libris Moſaicis, non erat pro meritis ſingulorum, nec in rebus adminiſtrandis ita erat acta.
34 Colligi non poteſt ex libris Moſaicis veteres Judæos æterna impiorum ſupplicia apud inferos pati.
35 Lex Moſaica non ideo Deo indigna cenſenda eſt, quia docet, Deum iniquitatem Patrum in filios viſitare.
36 Pœna talionis, quam lex Moſaica conſtituit, non fuit Deo legiſlatore indigna.
37 Licentia falſos Deos colendi non fuit Iſraelitis conceſſa.
38 Quod religio Judaica ſit minus perfecta quam Chriſtiana, id nihil probat contra divinam hujus et illius originem.
39 Iſraelitæ ſpoliis Ægyptiorum auferendis, legem naturæ non violabant.
40 Non erat Deo indignum Canaanæos Iſraelitis exſcindendos tradere.
41 Filia Jephthæ non fuit immolata.
42 Per legem Moſaicam Judæis non licuit pro victimis homines immolare.
43 Mandatum Abrahamo datum de immolatione Iſaaci ad mortem Chriſti repræſentandam, haud alienum fuit divinæ ſapientiæ aut juſtitiæ.
44 Non fuit Deo indignum diras Noachichas in Chamum conficere.
45 Nullæ in libro Pſalmorum obnunciantur diræ, quæ oſtendant eos non fuiſſe divino inſtinctu conſcriptos.

46 Scriptura

46 Scriptura qua docemur "Deum Cor Pharoahonis obfirmaſſe" nihil in ſe continet contra Dei benignitatem; quantum ex ratione aut revelatione tunc temporis Iſraelitis conceſſa colligi poteſt.

47 Hominibus qui ante diluvium vixerunt non licuit, eſcæ cauſa, animalia mactare.

48 Diluvium olim fuiſſe univerſale traditur in ſacra Scriptura, nec eſt hiſtoriæ vel civili vel naturali contrarium.

49 Veritas miraculorum, quæ in veteri teſtamento traduntur, cum Idololatria moribuſque depravatis Judæorum conſtare poteſt.

50 Vaticinia quibus denunciavit Moſes, Paleſtinam ob inobedientiam Judæorum incultam ab iis ſterilemque futuram eſſe, hodie implentur.

51 Deus cum dixerit Iſraelitis, ſe prophetam Moſi ſimilem ex fratribus eorum eſſe excitaturum, hoc promiſſo ſolum Meſſiam deſignavit.

52 Aliquæ extant prædictiones, temporibus Moſis antiquiores, quæ ad Chriſtum ſunt referendæ.

53 Ex veterum prophetarum prædictionibus duo Meſſiæ, alter Davidis alter Joſephi filius, non erant in mundum venturi.

54 Sceptrum quod non ante erat a Juda diſceſſurum quam Shiloh advenerit, poteſtatem tribus regendæ deſignabat.

55 Iſraelitæ circumciſionis ritum ab Ægyptiis non receperunt.

56 Mare rubrum, Iſraelitis per illud tranſeuntibus, ad utrumque latus inſtar muri per miraculum ſtetit.

57 Confuſio linguarum Babylonica abſque Dei interventu explanari nequit.

58 Miracula ſunt idonea argumenta divinæ Miſſionis.

59 Miracula fuiſſe olim edita ſatis probari poteſt ex humano teſtimonio.

60 Credibile eſt, Deum poſſe miracula facere, et interdum velle, et humano teſtimonio patet feciſſe.

61 Miracula non niſi a Deo aut a Creatura, particulari ejus juſſu et potentia agente, efficiuntur.

62 Magi Ægyptii vera coram Pharoahone miracula fecerunt.

63 Tentatio Chriſti in deſerto fuit viſio a Deo miſſa.

64 Tentatio Chriſti in deſerto non fuit viſio a Deo miſſa.

65 Nec per viſionem, nec per Diabolum, ſub qualibet externa forma, ſimiliter autem ac homo Chriſtus tentabatur.

66 Miracula in Evangeliis tradita hiſtoriam eam ipſis conjunctam adeo non infirmant, ut abſque illorum ope rerum geſtarum ſeries explicari nequeat.

67 Chriſti Apoſtolis vita defunctis credibile eſt ceſſaſſe miracula.

68 Extraordinaria ſpiritus ſancti dona ſtatim poſt tempora Apoſtolorum in Eccleſia Chriſtiana non ceſſaverunt.

69 Spiritus ſanctus eſt perſona.

70 Chriſtianorum eſt officium ſpiritum ſanctum colere et precari.

71 Dantur in Chriſto fidelibus certa quædam ſpiritus ſancti auxilia.

72 Fidei et virtutis adjumenta quæ homines a ſpiritu ſancto habent, eorum libertatem non tollunt.

73 Spiritus ſanctus interiora fidei ac virtutis adjumenta hominibus ita ſuppeditare ſolet, ut nullo animi tactu percipiantur.

74 Interiora quædam, Chriſtianæ Religionis ſuſcipiendæ ac præſtandæ adjumenta, hominum animis a ſpiritu ſancto ſubminiſtrantur.

75 Ad Theologiam Chriſtianam plene et perfecte intelligendam animo opus eſt literis doctriniſque imbuto.

76 Veritatis Chriſtianæ Religionis evidentia non a ſpiritu ſancto inſpiratur, ſed ex recto rationis uſu pendet.

77 Diverſa revelationum genera, pro varia rerum et hominum conditione, diverſis hominum moribus et ingeniis accommodantur.

78 Conſilium divinum de redimendo hominum genere, prout Chriſti tempora accedebant, gradatim aperiebatur.

79 In libris veteris Teſtamenti prædicitur Chriſtiana Diſpenſatio.

80 Chriſtus et Apoſtoli abroganda lege Moſaica de divina legiſlatoris auctoritate non detrahunt.

81 Religio quam Chriſtus humano generi tradidit non continetur lege naturali denuo promulganda.

82 Non eſt res indifferens quam quiſque religionem colat.

83 Error in doctrinis religionis ſpeculativis non eſt innocens.

84 Poſt Canonem Scripturæ conſignatum novæ revelationes non ſunt expectandæ.

85 Meſſias per veteres prophetas Judæis promiſſus non futurus erat rex terreſtris.

86 Veritas Chriſtianæ revelationis patet ex impletione prædictionum veterum prophetarum.

87 Jeſus Nazarenus fuit verus Meſſias a Deo promiſſus.

88 Prædictiones veterum prophetarum non ita citantur in novo teſtamento, quaſi ſingulæ ſeorſim a cæteris oſtenderent Jeſum eſſe Meſſiam.

89 Clades Hieroſolymitana et ſtatus populi Judaici hodiernus pro magno argumento eſt veritatis Chriſtianæ Religionis.

90 Deus nulla lege aut vaticinatione ſignificavit, ſe nolle Judæorum quenquam in ullam Chriſtianorum civitatem civem adſcriptitium recipi.

91 Propagatio fidei Chriſtianæ ante Conſtantini tempora probat auctoritatem ejus divinam.

92 Converſio Divi Pauli ortum ſuum non debuit ſuperſtitioni, ſed miraculis a Deo editis et veritati Chriſtianæ Religionis.

93 Ex vita et moribus Chriſti et Apoſtolorum Chriſtianæ religionis veritas probari poteſt.

94 Miracula Chriſti una cum doctrina probant divinam ejus miſſionem.

95 Miracula Chriſti ipſa per ſe valent ad probandam divinam ejus miſſionem.

96 Ad ſtabiliendam revelationis doctrinam non ſatis valet interna evidentia.

97 Diſſenſiones Chriſtianorum, de rebus quæ in religione Chriſtiana contineantur, non oſtendunt religionem ipſam eſſe falſam.

98 Variantes lectiones et menda auctoritatem ſacræ Scripturæ non labefactant in rebus ad fidem et mores ſpectantibus.

99 Diſſenſiones

99 Diſſenſiones inter Apoſtolos de circumciſione gentium divinam Chriſtianæ religionis auctoritatem non impugnant.

100 Cæteri Apoſtoli cum Paulo conſentiebant, Judæos ſine obtemperanda lege Moſaica poſſe per Chriſtum ſalutem conſequi.

101 Auctoritas Teſtimonii quo Religio Chriſti confirmatur temporum longinquitate non imminuta eſt.

102 Nihil in Evangelio Matthæi traditur ex quo probari poſſit, id Scriptum fuiſſe poſt excidium Hieroſolymitanum.

103 Apoſtoli nihil tradiderunt, ex quo intelligamus credidiſſe eos mundum ſuis temporibus finem fuiſſe habiturum.

104 Religio Chriſtiana non ideo vituperanda eſt quod nihil de amiciſiis privata vel de amore patriæ præſcripſerit.

105 Divina Chriſtianæ religionis auctoritas non imminuitur ex eo quod nondum univerſis innotuit.

106 Jeſuitæ Chriſti cauſam male agunt tolerando ritus et cæremonias, quas apud Sinas in honorem Confuſii, parentum, cæterorumque majorum mos eſt celebrare.

107 Magiſtratui jus non competit ſubditos coercendi ad cultum illum divinum celebrandum, lege licet ſtabilitum, quem ipſi vel rationi vel revelationi haud conſentaneum cenſent.

108 Non eſt libertati Chriſtianæ alienum ut in rebus indifferentibus ad cultum Dei ſpectantibus Eccleſia auctoritatem habeat.

109 In fidei controverſiis nulla datur eccleſiæ auctoritas quæ jus tollit privati judicii.

110 Chriſtianorum hominum qui ſe ad civitatis ſuæ religionem conformare nolint, jus nullum violatur ſi e muneribus civilibus lege lata excludantur.

111 Indulgentia Pontificis nuper conceſſa nec rationi, nec ſacris literis, nec reipublicæ ſaluti repugnat.

112 Vis externa non eſt hominibus adhibenda propter religionem quam profitentur.

113 Unaquæque eccleſia jure poſtulare poteſt, ut ii quibus publice docendi munus committitur, religionis Chriſtianæ inſtitutionibus, ejus auctoritate comprobatis, aſſentiant.

114 Et rationi et ſacris Scripturis conſentaneum eſt ut homines eccleſiaſtici poteſtati civili ſubjiciantur.

115 Non eſt Chriſtianis interdictum, ut quavis de cauſa fidem ſuam ullo jurejurando ne aſtringant.

116 Nulla in civilibus hominum officiis mutatio eſt facta per Chriſti religionem.

117 Non eſt a Chriſti religione alienum civili auctoritate recipi ac ſtabiliri.

118 Chriſtiana religio incrementa ſua in primis eccleſiæ ſæculis non debuit cauſis, ut vocantur, ſecundis, ſed partim internæ ſuæ excellentiæ, partim auctoris ſui poteſtati divinæ.

119 Perſpicuitas ſacrorum librorum non efficit ut ſupervacaneum ſit homines ad religionem Chriſti inſtituere.

120 Miniſtris eccleſiæ debetur aliquod ſtipendium.

121 Forma regiminis in eccleſia Anglicana conſtituti, et verbo Dei et eccleſiæ primitivæ uſu ſancitur.

122 Eccleſiaſtici

122 Eccleſiaſtici regiminis in Anglia et in Scotia conſtituti, neutra forma, aut juri hominum naturali aut verbo Dei repugnat.

123 A Chriſti et Apoſtolorum inſtitutione patet, ordinem fuiſſe Epiſcopatus a Preſbyteriatu diverſum, eoque ſuperiorem.

124 Statæ precum formulæ ſunt maxime conformes ſacris Scripturis et eccleſiæ primitivæ praxi.

125 Liturgiæ in diverſis eccleſiis diverſæ, modo ſacris literis haud adverſentur, non ſunt improbandæ.

126 Precatio Dominica eſt formula quam omnes Chriſti Diſcipuli in Deo precando adhibere debent.

127 Preces et publicæ et privatæ tantum in nomine Chriſti ſunt peragendæ.

128 Creaturam cultu religioſo proſequi non licet.

129 E Stephani martyris moribundi precibus patet Jeſum Chriſtum eſſe Deum.

130 Chriſtus ſummo cultu, quem Deo Patri reddimus colendus eſt.

131 Chriſtus quà Mediator novi fœderis eſt adæquatum objectum cultus religioſi.

132 Fidei in tres perſonas ejuſdem ſubſtantiæ, potentiæ, et æternitatis, Patrem, Filium, et Spiritum Sanctum, unius Dei cultus non repugnat.

133 Myſteria revelationis non oſtendunt eam non eſſe a Deo traditam.

134 Deo indignum non fuit ut inſtituta poſitiva in religione traderet.

135 Poſitiva religionis præcepta non minus obligant quam moralia.

136 Duo tantum novi fœderis ſacramenta inſtituit Chriſtus.

137 Confirmatio, pœnitentia, ordo, matrimonium, et extrema unctio pro ſacramentis Evangelicis non ſunt habenda.

138 Cœna Dominica Epuli ſacrificalis rationem non habet.

139 Nullum in miſſa fit ſacrificium quo peccata viventium ac mortuorum expiantur.

140 Animus Chriſtianus neceſſario præcedit dignam Euchariſtiæ perceptionem.

141 Euchariſtia uſque ad ſecundum Chriſti adventum ab ejus Diſcipulis celebrari debet.

142 Calix Laicis non eſt denegandus.

143 Doctrina pontificiorum de tranſubſtantiatione nec rationi, nec ſenſuum teſtimonio, nec ſacris Scripturis conſentaneum eſt.

144 Tranſubſtantiatio non eſt æque credibilis ac Trinitas perſonarum in una eſſentia.

145 Leges Anglicanæ quæ vetant munera reipublicæ cuiquam deferri qui nolit Euchariſtiam percipere juxta eccleſiæ Anglicanæ præſcriptum Euchariſtiæ religionem non polluunt.

146 Recte in eccleſia Anglicana ſancitur ne quis niſi flexis genubus cœnam Domini capiat.

147 Religio Chriſtiana poſtulat ut qui eam ſuſcipiant aqua baptizentur.

148 Baptiſmus parvulorum omnino in eccleſia retinendus eſt ut qui cum Chriſti inſtitutione optime conveniat.

149 Lex Chriſti non poſtulat ut omnes qui baptizentur in aquam immergantur.

150 Aquæ aſperſio ſeu affuſio in baptiſmate adminiſtrando non irritum reddit ſacramentum.
151 Omne peccatum quod Chriſtiani poſt baptiſmum committant, ſi pœnitendo corrigatur, eos a ſalute non excludit.
152 Sabbatum erat, ante legem per Moſem traditam, a Deo conſtitutum.
153 Præcepta Moſaica de modo obſervandi Sabbatum Chriſtianos non obligant.
154 Sabbatum ab ultimo die ſeptimanæ recte eſt inter Chriſtianos ad primum tranſlatum.
155 Ad diem Dominicum religioſe obſervandum cuncti Chriſtiani tenentur.
156 Doctrina abſolutæ prædeſtinationis cum divinis pugnat attributis.
157 Doctrina prædeſtinationis et electionis ad futurum aut miſeriæ aut felicitatis ſtatum ex ſacra Scriptura colligi nequit.
158 Prædeſtinatio Paulina tota ſpectat ad Gentium vocationem.
159 In libris novi fœderis nihil de prædeſtinatione traditur quod diligentiam hominum in officiis præſtandis jure imminuat.
160 Sacræ Scripturæ nullibi docent eos qui de Chriſto nunquam audiverunt non poſſe ſalutem æternam conſequi.
161 Salus noſtra in fide in Chriſtum redemptorem conſiſtit.
162 Doctrina eccleſiæ pontificiæ de purgatorio nullis vel ſacræ Scripturæ vel rationis nititur fundamentis.
163 Sanctorum et Angelorum cultus et invocatio apud pontificios eſt idololatria.
164 Ipſe jejunandi actus per ſe et ſua natura vim et rationem religionis non habet.
165 Confeſſio privata ſacerdoti facta non eſt ad ſalutem neceſſaria.
166 Plebi et indoctis ſacrorum librorum lectio non eſt interdicenda.
167 Nec Petrus nec Pontifex Romanus conſtitutus fuit a Chriſto totius eccleſiæ monarcha
168 In ſacris libris continentur omnia quæ ſunt ad ſalutem neceſſaria.
169 Sacra Scriptura eſt unica Chriſtianæ fidei norma.
170 Nullus eſt in eccleſia judex infallibilis controverſiarum.
171 Characteres hominis peccati in poſteriore Paulina ad Theſſalonicenſes epiſtola expreſſi Pontifici Romano apprime conveniunt.
172 Pars hiſtorica Novi Teſtamenti quæ continet eventus divinam opem non expoſcentes jure fidem noſtram vindicat.
173 Datur ſtatus medius inter mortem et reſurrectionem.
174 Non datur ſtatus medius inter mortem et reſurrectionem.
175 Nec felicitas beatorum perfecta nec miſeria impiorum extrema erit ante reſurrectionem et generale judicium.
176 Jobi de vindice ſuo videndo fiducia ad ſpem vitæ futuræ referenda eſt.
177 Reſurrectio Chriſti probatur teſtibus fide dignis.
178 Reſurrectio mortuorum patet ex parabola Divitis ac Lazari.
179 Anima a corpore ſoluta in ſtatu ſeparato manet ad reſurrectionem.
180 Reſurrectio quæ patefacta et promiſſa eſt in Evangelio eſt reſurrectio corporis.
181 Æterna felicitas non patet niſi ex revelatione.

182 Pœnæ improborum erunt æternæ.
183 Beatos in ſtatu gloriæ ſe mutuo agnituros eſſe nec ratione nec ſacris Scripturis refragatur.
184 Ex Evangeliſtarum et Apoſtolorum ſcriptis minime patet qui in hiſtoriolis ſuis ſervari dicuntur eos ideo vitam æternam conſecuturos.
185 Chriſtus vera dæmonia ejecit.
186 Oraculorum reſponſa antiquitus reddita non a ſacerdotum præſtigiis aut humano quolibet artificio, ſed a dæmonum quos Deus Ethnicos illudere paſſus eſt malignitate.
187 Diaconi non ad civile tantum, ſed ad ſacrum etiam munus initio ſunt conſtituti.
188 Bona Chriſtianorum non ſunt omnibus communia.
189 Nec peccavit Chriſtus nec peccare potuit.
190 Non neceſſitate quadam impulſus ſed conſilio ſuo obſecutus Judas, Chriſtum in pontificum manus tradidit.
191 Particularis providentiæ doctrina cum ratione et ſacris Scripturis conſonat.
192 Præcepta de charitate inimicorum quæ in ſacris libris traduntur naturæ hominum apte conveniunt.
193 Licet ſub novo fœdere Chriſtianis ſanguine veſci.
194 Epiſtola ad Hebræos a Paulo ſcripta eſt.
195 Mons Ebal fuit, in quo Iſraelitæ a Deo juſſi ſunt aram extruere poſtquam Jordanem tranſiiſſent.
196 Judæi recte recuſarunt ne Samaritani templum Dei ſecum ædificarent.
197 Apoſtoli omnes intellexerunt linguas Sancti Spiritus afflatu.
198 Chriſti bene merita afficiunt pœnitentes et probos, non impœnitentes et reprobos.
199 Præcepta Evangelii quæ ad mores ſpectant tendunt ad humanam felicitatem promovendam.
200 Chriſtus in mundum venit ut homines non ſolum doceret ſed redimeret.

These Queſtions may be ſufficient to give the Reader ſome notion of the Subjects, which have of late engaged the attention of the Diſputants in the Divinity Schools at Cambridge. I will afford him an opportunity of contraſting our labours with thoſe of our Predeceſſors, without taking upon me to determine whether we ſhall derive credit or diſhonour from the compariſon. If he ſhould think that we have in ſome inſtances a more enlarged view of the Chriſtian ſyſtem, and more liberal notions concerning the manner in which diſſentients from our particular mode of faith and worſhip ought to be treated than they had, I will take the liberty to ſay, that there is room for improvement in both theſe points.

In

In 1634 were publiſhed at Cambridge——*Determinationes Quæſtionum quarundam Theologicarum, in Academia Cantabrigienſi publicè diſputatarum*——by Doctor DAVENANT, then Biſhop of Saliſbury, and formerly Lady Margaret's Profeſſor of Divinity.

INDEX QUÆSTIONUM.

QUÆST.

1 CONCUPISCENTIA in renatis eſt peccatum.
2 Papiſtarum preces pro defunctis ſunt inanes.
3 Verè credentes certi eſſe poſſunt de ſua ſalute.
4 Nulla eſt temporalis Papæ poteſtas ſuper reges in ordine ad bonum ſpirituale.
5 Infallibilis determinatio fidei non eſt annexa cathedræ Papali.
6 Cæca Jeſuitarum obedientia eſt illicita.
7 Non licet Proteſtanti ſalva conſcientia miſſæ intereſſe.
8 Opera pœnalia non ſunt divinæ juſtitiæ ſatisfactoria.
9 Non datur liberum arbitrium in non renatis, ad bonum ſpirituale.
10 Opera renatorum labe peccati ſunt inquinata.
11 Civilis juriſdictio jure conceditur perſonis eccleſiaſticis.
12 Renuente magiſtratu, non licet populo reformationem eccleſiæ moliri.
13 Miſſa pontificia non eſt ſacrificium propitiatorum pro vivis et mortuis.
14 Antiqui Patres non meruerunt Chriſti incarnationem, nec aliquas ejus circumſtantias.
15 Tota poteſtas ſacerdotum eſt ſpiritualis.
16 Bonitas ad malum non fluit ex principiis integræ naturæ.
17 Jeſuitici pontificii non poſſunt eſſe boni ſubditi.
18 Cultus religioſus creaturæ eſt Idololatria.
19 Rex in regno ſuo eſt minor ſolo Deo.
20 Eccleſia Anglicana juſtiſſime obligat ad cæremonias.
21 Eccleſia Romana eſt apoſtatica.
22 Decretum non tollit libertatem.
23 Sacramenta non conferunt gratiam ex opere operato.
24 In eſſentia divina nec aliud nec accidens.
25 Præſcientia divina non erat cauſa lapſus humani.
26 Subjectum divinæ prædeſtinationis eſt homo lapſus.
27 Papiſtæ tenentur intereſſe ſacris Proteſtantium.
28 Papæ juriſdictio non eſt univerſalis.
29 Fides implicita non eſt ſalutifera.
30 Dominium temporale non fundatur in gratia.
31 Omne peccatum eſt ſua natura mortiferum.
32 Conſilia, quæ vocantur Evangelica, habent quandoque vim præcepti.

33 Remiſſa

33 Remiſſa culpa remittitur pæna.
34 Nemo poteſt de congruo mereri primam gratiam divinam.
35 Eccleſia inviſibilis non eſt Idea Platonica.
36 Chriſti victima ſola vere expiatoria.
37 Fides juſtificans eſt fiducia in Chriſtum mediatorem.
38 Fides juſtificans non poteſt a charitate disjungi.
39 Laici non ſunt arcendi a lectione Scripturarum.
40 Superbia fuit primum peccatum Angelorum.
41 Publica Religionis exercitia ſunt lingua vulgari peragenda.
42 Diverſitas graduum in miniſtris Evangelicis, verbo Dei non repugnat.
43 Cœlibatus non eſt neceſſario ſacris ordinibus annexus.
44 Sancti non ſunt invocandi.
45 Ignorantia non excuſat peccatum.
46 Sancta eccleſia Catholica quam credimus, ex ſolis conſtat electis.
47 Nec Petrus nec Pontifex Romanus conſtitutus fuit a Chriſto eccleſiæ totius monarcha.
48 Cenſura eccleſiaſtica non tollit vincula officiorum.
49 Non datur omnibus auxilium ſufficiens ad ſalutem.

Doctor TUCKNEY was elected Regius Profeſſor of Divinity in the Univerſity of Cambridge in 1655; his *Prælectiones Theologicæ, nec non Determinationes Quæſtionum variarum inſignium in Scholis Academicis Cantabrigienſibus habitæ*——were publiſhed at Amſterdam in 1679.

QUÆSTIONES DETERMINATÆ.

1 MAGISTRATUM gerere non repugnat Chriſti inſtitutis.
2 Humana Chriſti natura non eſt ex unione hypoſtatica Divinarum proprietatum particeps.
3 Religio non eſt vi et armis propaganda.
4 Infallibilitas nulli competit creaturæ.
5 Electio eſt prorſus gratuita.
6 Omne peccatum eſt ſua natura mortale.
7 Ad miniſterium eccleſiæ ſuſcipiendum ordinarie requiritur legitima vocatio.
8 Chriſtiano licet ex intuitu mercedis operari.
9 Meritum Papiſticum ex S. Scriptura non probatur.
10 Purgatorium Papiſticum eſt fictitium.
11 Pœnæ propter peccatum æternæ non ſunt iniquæ.
12 Ψυχοπαννυχια nec ratione fundatur nec Scriptura.
13 Peccata præterita et futura non ſimul remittuntur.
14 Fraudes quæ vocantur piæ ſunt illicitæ.
15 Nullus aſſenſus conſtituit rationem fidei juſtificantis.

16 Ad

16 Ad redemptionis noſtræ λυτρον tam activa quam paſſiva Chriſti ſpectat obedientia.
17 Deus reputat pro juſtis non niſi revèra juſtos.
18 Rectitudo primi parentis non fuit donum ſupernaturale.
19 Beati in ſtatu glorjæ ſe mutuo ſunt agnituri.
20 Αυτοφωνια non eſt licita.
21 Vere fideles certi eſſe poſſunt de ſalute.
22 Credentes tenentur ad obedientiam legis.
23 Dominium temporale non fundatur in gratia.
24 Cognitio ſana neceſſario credendorum eſt pars religionis eſſentialis.
25 Regnum Chriſti perſonale in terris non eſt expectandum.
26 Miniſtris conjugium non eſt interdicendum.
27 Intellectus vi ſola nativi luminis non percipit ſalutariter doctrinam Evangelii.
28 Fides juſtificans a bonis operibus ſejungi nequit.
29 Præcepta Evangelica de vita inſtituenda ſunt rectæ rationi conſentanea.
30 Renati in hac vita non poſſunt perfecte legem Dei adimplere.
31 Externus judex infallibilis in controverſiis fidei, nec datur, nec requiritur in eccleſia.
32 Bona opera ſunt neceſſaria ad ſalutem.
33 Concupiſcentia in renatis eſt peccatum.
34 Quintum Danielis imperium non reſtat adhuc expectandum.
35 Interna Dei illuminatio non tollit uſum neceſſarium miniſterii Evangelici.
36 Officia eccleſiaſtica ſunt lingua vulgo nota celebranda.
37 Verbum Dei externum eſt ordinarium medium converſionis ad ſalutem.
38 Indulgentiæ pontificiæ non nituntur verbo divino.
39 Chriſtus eſt Patri ὁμοούσιος.
40 Status in quo homo nec juſtus ſit nec injuſtus non datur.
41 Jacobi ſententia de juſtificatione non eſt adverſaria Paulinæ.
42 Uſura legitima non eſt illicita.
43 Sacrificia ſub et ante Moſaicam œconomiam typi fuerunt Jeſu Chriſti.
44 Divortium matrimoniale non ſolvit vinculum.
45 Culpa remiſſa non retinetur pœna.
46 Non licet gladio animadvertere in hæreticos.
47 Promulgatio eſt de eſſentia legis divinæ.
48 Principes nulli terreno foro ſuut obnoxii.
49 Externa fidei profeſſio dat jus ad ſacramenta.
50 Lectio S. Scripturæ non eſt interdicenda Laicis.
51 Characteres Antichriſti in Scriptura expreſſi præcipue conveniunt pontifici Romano.
52 Satisfactio Chriſti pro peccatis eſt congrua juſtitiæ et gratiæ divinæ.

I once intended to have digeſted the whole of Theology into a connected ſeries of propoſitions, with references to ſuch Authors ancient and modern, as had treated the affirmative and negative ſide of each, with the greateſt clearneſs and preciſion.

The mere enunciation of a propoſition conveys a degree of uſeful knowledge, and the various queſtions which ſuggeſt themſelves on every important ſubject in Divinity might be ſtated with ſuch preciſion, and made ſo to depend on each other, that they would comprehend in a ſhort compaſs the marrow of many a bulky Syſtem, and would at the ſame time give ſuch a regular and complete view of the whole ſubject, as conſtitutes the chief utility of Syſtematic Treatiſes. I had made ſome little progreſs in this work, when I was ſeized with a diſorder three years ago, that has rendered me unequal to the exertions which its completion would require. If any perſon ſhould be induced to undertake a work of this nature, he will find his endeavours much aſſiſted by the *Aphoriſmi per Univerſam Theologiam Brevieres*, of *Cocceius*; and by his Aphoriſms *contra Socinianos* et *contra Pontificios*; by the *Syllabus Quæſtionum præcipuarum, quæ inter Socinianos reliquoſque Eccleſiæ Reformatæ, ſimul ac Pontificiæ Theologos ventilantur*, publiſhed in Biſhop Barlow's Remains; by a ſmall tract intitled *Quæſtiones præcipuæ, eæque nude propoſitæ, de Univerſa Doctrina Chriſtianorum*, Bremæ 1617; by the *Summa Theologica* of *Thomas Aquinas*; for notwithſtanding the ridicule which uſually, in theſe days, attends the mere mention of the *Angelic* Doctor, I will venture to affirm, That in that work there are, mixed indeed with many difficult ſubtleties and perverſe interpretations of Scripture, not a few Theological queſtions of great moment ſtated with clearneſs and judgment; by *Doddridge's Lectures*, by the *Theſes Theologicæ* of *Voſſius*, and of *Le Blanc*, by the *Syntagma Theſium in Academia Salmurienſi diſputatarum*, by the *Works* of *Epiſcopius*, *Limborch*, *Turretin*, *Curcellæus*, *Buddeus*, *Calvin*, *Arminius*, *Beckius*, and by our Engliſh Divines; of whom it may be ſaid in general, that they have illuſtrated particular doctrines of Chriſtianity with more ſtrength of argument, and perſpicuity of language, than are to be met with in the writings of the Divines of any other nation.

THE

PREFACE.

THE Reader is here preſented with the plan which Dr. TAYLOR followed, in leading his pupils to a juſt and rational acquaintance with the principles of Religion, founded upon an accurate knowledge of the Scriptures.

The importance of this ſervice, and his accountableneſs in a great meaſure for the event, were conſiderations of the laſt moment, and cauſed him to compoſe, and deliver his academical inſtructions with the utmoſt circumſpection. To his own judgment, after the ſtricteſt reviſal, the principles here advanced, appeared juſt and ſcriptural; but he did not therefore preſume they were abſolutely free from error; much leſs did he think himſelf authorized, as a public tutor, to impoſe his ſentiments on young minds with an overbearing hand. That he might do juſtice to his pupils, and himſelf, he always prefaced his lectures with the following ſolemn CHARGE, which does honor to the Author, and affords a noble precedent to ſeminaries of learning.

I. " I DO ſolemnly charge you, in the name of the God of Truth, and of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and before whoſe judgment-ſeat you muſt in no long time appear, that in all your ſtudies and inquiries of a religious nature, preſent or future, you do conſtantly, carefully, impartially, and conſcientiouſly attend to evidence, as it lies in the holy Scriptures, or in the nature of things, and the dictates of reaſon; cautiouſly guarding againſt the ſallies of imagination, and the fallacy of ill-grounded conjecture."

II. — " That you admit, embrace, or aſſent to no principle, or ſentiment, by me taught or advanced, but only ſo far as it ſhall appear to you to be ſupported and juſtified by proper evidence from Revelation, or the reaſon of things."

III. — " That, if at any time hereafter, any principle or ſentiment, by me taught or advanced, or by you admitted and embraced, ſhall, upon impartial and faithful examination, appear to you, to be dubious or falſe, you either ſuſpect, or totally reject ſuch principle or ſentiment."

IV. — " That

IV. — " That you keep your mind always open to evidence. — That you labour to baniſh from your breaſt all prejudice, poſſeſſion, and party-zeal. — That you ſtudy to live in peace and love with all your fellow-chriſtians; and that you ſteddily aſſert for yourſelf, and freely allow to others, the unalienable rights of judgment and conſcience."

Is it poſſible to adjuſt the terms between a tutor and his pupils more equitably? But it muſt here be obſerved, that Dr. TAYLOR ever meant, the liberty he claimed for himſelf, and allowed to others, ſhould be directed by a ſerious frame of mind, and a real deſire to promote practical religion. The inlarged view he had of divine things penetrated his own heart, and had a manifeſt influence over his practice. He laboured to explain and vindicate the doctrines of Revelation for this reaſon, that he might moſt effectually ſerve the cauſe of vital Religion.

It were to be wiſhed, that thoſe who are ſtudents for the miniſtry, who chooſe to conſult his writings, may imbibe the ſame ſpirit of genuine piety. This will be a never-failing ſource of weight and credit; and without it, other qualifications will be inſufficient for religious improvement.

The Doctor's whole life being devoted to an impartial ſtudy of the Scriptures, not by way of ſpeculation and amuſement, but for the moſt valuable purpoſes to himſelf and others, it is no wonder to find him ſo earneſtly recommending them to the ſerious attention of Chriſtians. This is the important ſubject of thoſe chapters, which immediately follow the Scheme of SCRIPTURE-DIVINITY.

The Editor ſubmits the whole (as the Author would have done) to the candor of every intelligent Reader; deſiring that what is here advanced, may be regarded no further than ſhall appear conformable to truth and Scripture, in ſubſerviency to the beſt intereſt of Mankind.

A SCHEME

A

SCHEME

OF

SCRIPTURE-DIVINITY, &c.

CHAP. I.

Of CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

CHRISTIAN Theology, or Divinity, is the Science, which, from Revelation, teacheth the knowledge of God, namely, his nature and perfections, his relations to us, his ways and diſpenſations, his will with reſpect to our actions, and his purpoſes with reſpect to our being; in order to form in our minds right principles, for our direction and comfort, and in our converſation right practice for ſecuring his favour and bleſſing.

In natural religion we take our proofs from the natures of things as perceived, conſidered, and compared by the human mind; but now we advance upon the authority and ſenſe of writings and books; I mean, the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtaments, acknowledged by the whole Chriſtian world as a true revelation from God, and as the ſtandard of faith and doctrine.

That God would revele to us, by ſuch ways as he in his wiſdom judgeth moſt proper, ſuch things as are needful for us to know and to do, for the improvement and happineſs of our nature, is perfectly agreeable to his wiſdom and Goodneſs, who is our Father, and delighteth in our well-being; and is alſo perfectly ſuitable to our circumſtances, as mankind are ignorant and weak, and very liable to error and deception. It is conſonant to the nature of things, that a father ſhould inſtruct his child; and that perſons of knowledge and learning ſhould teach the ignorant. How much more that God, whoſe underſtanding is infinite, and without whom we can know nothing at all, ſhould teach and inſtruct us all?

And that his inſtructions ſhould be conſigned to writing is alſo very fit and proper; as this, in fact, is the ſureſt method of preſerving them

in the world. Tradition from one generation to another is no ſafe conveyance. The experiment hath been ſufficiently tried in the ages before the flood; wherein, though tradition was then greatly favoured by the longevity of mankind, yet we find, that both the Religion of Nature and traditionary Revelation were both ſo far loſt, that in the ſpace of 1656 years, *the earth was filled with violence——for all fleſh had corrupted his way upon earth.* Gen vi. 11, 12. And both would have been entirely loſt, had not God in an extraordinary manner interpoſed. Likewiſe after the flood, notwithſtanding any tradition from *Noah*, idolatry ſoon overſpread the nations, and rendered it expedient for God, to deviſe a new conſtitution, to prevent a ſecond univerſal corruption and apoſtacy. And ſo falſe and faithleſs is Tradition, that for many ages in the Jewiſh nation, and for many ages under the Goſpel, Tradition was, and ſtill is, ſo far oppoſed to Revelation, as to obſcure and diſparage it, and make the commandment of God therein of no effect. Inſomuch, that had not a written Revelation by Divine Providence been introduced into the world, and preſerved in it, true Religion would have been baniſhed out of it.

The benefit of Revelation is very great, but then it muſt be faithfully uſed; otherwiſe it will be turned againſt itſelf, and made the patron of Falſehood and Deluſion. Which, in fact, hath been the caſe. Men, either weak or wicked, have perverted the Scriptures, and reduced them to a ſubſerviency to either their luſts, or preconceived opinions. The latter was remarkably the caſe in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity. When any of the Philoſophers were converted to the Chriſtian Profeſſion, they generally brought along with them the ſchemes and notions of the particular ſects, to which they were attached; thoſe influenced their minds in the ſtudy of the Scriptures, and inclined them to wreſt the Scriptures into a conſiſtency with their preconceived opinions. Hence it is, that many notions, inconſiſtent with the word of God, and with each other, have been handed down to us from the earlieſt times under the ſacred character of ſound Chriſtian Doctrine. And in our own times, we find men pleading the authority of Scripture for a variety of oppoſite and contradictory ſentiments, which therefore cannot all of them be founded upon Scripture.

For the Holy Scriptures, being a Revelation from God, the moſt perfect and invariable ſtandard of Truth, though written by different perſons, living in remote ages, during the ſpace of about 1500 years, from *Moſes* to *John*, who wrote the Revelation; yet, being a Revelation from God, muſt be perfectly conſiſtent in all their parts and principles, views and ſentiments, expreſt in uniformity of language. For if the language were multiform and various, the ſenſe would neceſſarily be obſcure, and the underſtanding confounded, and ſo the ends of Revelation would be defeated. And if, notwithſtanding the great changes in cuſtoms, diſpoſitions, intereſts, and religious ſentiments, which muſt, and actually did, happen in ſo long a tract of time, we do find, that one conſiſtent ſcheme, in one conſiſtent uniform language, is carried on in all the writings, which compoſe the Scriptures, we may ſtrongly conclude, that they are a Revelation from God; not the produce of human wiſdom, which could never in ages ſo remote, and for the greateſt part ſo illiterate, have combined

bined to carry on a regular, uniform ſcheme of religious principles and ſentiments, in the ſame language or modes of expreſſion; but the inſpiration or dictates of one Spirit, the Spirit of God. Hence it follows,

I. That in explaining the Scriptures, conſiſtency of ſenſe and principles ought to be ſupported in all the ſeveral parts thereof; and that, if any part be ſo interpreted as to claſh with any other, we may be ſure ſuch interpretation cannot be juſtified. Nor can it otherwiſe be rectified, than by faithfully comparing Scripture with Scripture, and bringing what may ſeem to be obſcure into a conſiſtency with what is plain and evident.

II. The ſenſe of Scripture can no otherwiſe be underſtood, than by underſtanding the force and import of Scriptural language. And the force and import of Scriptural language can be ſettled in no method more authentic, than by collating the ſeveral paſſages in which any phraſe or expreſſion occurs. Thus, in every view, Scripture is the beſt interpreter of Scripture.

III. Figurative expreſſions ſhould be carefully diſtinguiſhed from thoſe that are literal; and *vice verſa*. The oriental, and conſequently, the Scriptural tropes and figures of ſpeech, are very bold, and different from the European.

IV. Single ſentences are not to be detached from the places where they ſtand, but to be taken in Connection with the whole diſcourſe. The occaſion, coherence, and connection of the writing, the argument that is carrying on, the ſcope and intent of the paragraph, are to be carefully attended to.

V. We ſhould always interpret Scripture in a ſenſe conſiſtent with the laws of natural religion; or with the known perfections of God, and the notions of right and wrong, good and evil, which are diſcoverable in the works of creation, and in the preſent conſtitution of things. The language of Nature is moſt certainly the language of God, the ſole author of Nature. And however the Divine Wiſdom may diverſify the circumſtances of ſupernatural Revelation, yet the law of Nature, as it is founded in the unchangeable Natures of things, muſt be the baſis and ground work of every conſtitution of religion, which God had erected. Whence it follows, that the ſtudy and knowledge of natural Religion is a neceſſary introduction to the ſtudy and right underſtanding of Revelation. And we may further conclude that ſupernatural Revelation, in all its parts and principles, as it certainly is, ſo it always ſhould be, interpreted and underſtood in perfect harmony with natural Religion, or the dictates of Reaſon.

But miſtake me not; I do not mean, that the law or religion of Nature is commenſurate to Revelation; or, that nothing is to be admitted in Revelation, but what is diſcoverable by the light of Nature, or by human Reaſon. So far from that, that the whole of Revelation, properly ſo called, could never have been diſcovered by human Reaſon. And therefore in matters of pure Revelation, it is a very falſe and fallacious way to begin firſt with what our Reaſon may dictate and diſcover. Becauſe our Reaſon unaſſiſted by Revelation, in ſuch caſes, can diſcover nothing

nothing at all. For inſtance, the conſequences of *Adam*'s tranſgreſſion upon his poſterity; the covenant made with *Abraham*; the nature and miſſion of the Son of God; the grant of bleſſings, and of eternal life by him. Concerning thoſe things, we could have known nothing at all, had not God reveled them to us. And in ſuch matters of pure Revelation, the firſt thing we have to do, is to enquire, not what human Reaſon can diſcover, but what God has diſcovered, and declared in Scripture. But at the ſame time it is true, that God hath diſcovered nothing in Scripture inconſiſtent with what he has diſcovered in the nature of things expoſed to the view of all mankind. And therefore, if we underſtand any thing in reveled Religion, in a ſenſe contradictory to natural religion, or to the known perfections of God, and the common notions of good and evil, which he hath written upon all our hearts, we may be ſure we are in an error, and miſtake the ſenſe of Revelation.

I. He who would effectually ſtudy the word of God, ought, above all things, to be deeply ſenſible of the infinite value of true knowledge and wiſdom; and how abſolutely neceſſary it is to his eternal happineſs, to cultivate and improve his intellectual powers, in the uſe of all thoſe means, which God hath put into his hands. The Scriptures are given us, not for amuſement, or meer ſpeculation, in peruſing the curious remains of antiquity, the language, manners, and Theology of ſome celebrated ancients; but they are all, from begining to end, pointed directly at our hearts and lives, to make us wiſe unto ſalvation. There we find every rule of the moſt conſummate wiſdom, and every principle of truth and comfort; and the whole is deſigned to refine our nature into its proper excellence, to guide us into the paths of purity, peace, and righteouſneſs; to make us happy in ourſelves, and a bleſſing to all about us, and finally to qualify us for the full enjoyment of God for ever.

But if we are cold and indifferent to any attainments in true wiſdom; if we chooſe to dream, or jeſt and trifle away the important ſeaſon of life, deſpiſing the glorious advantages we enjoy, while we eagerly purſue the low and tranſitory things of this world, in neglect of ourſelves, of God, and immortality, of all that is truly great and good and excellent, we ſhall receive little or no advantage from any explications of the Holy Scriptures. We ſhall not value or reliſh them, we can have no ground to expect the divine bleſſing to aſſiſt our ſtudies, but have reaſon to fear we ſhall be left to ourſelves, to wander from God, from truth, and life, in deplorable ignorance and folly. Attend, therefore, to the voice of Divine Wiſdom, *Prov.* ii. 1, &c. *My ſon, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee,* [lay them up as a treaſure תִּצְפֹּן in thy heart] *ſo that thou incline thine ear unto wiſdom, and apply thine heart unto underſtanding; yea, if thou crieſt after knowledge, and lifteſt up thy voice for underſtanding* [as we do for thoſe things, which we moſt of all deſire, and moſt of all ſtand in need of] *If thou ſeekeſt her as ſilver, and ſearcheſt for her, as for hid treaſures:* [as covetous men ſeek money, and ranſack the whole world for the treaſures, in which they delight. If thus you value, and ſtudy to advance the improvement of your minds in knowledge and wiſdom] *Then ſhalt thou underſtand the*

fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God: [which of all underſtanding is infinitely the moſt excellent.]

II. But this ſenſe of the value of Divine Knowledge, and this deſire to obtain it, muſt be underſtood in a connection with a ſincere endeavour to live agreeably to it. For ſhould a perſon, under the greateſt advantages of learning, and with the utmoſt aſſiduity ſtudy the Scriptures, he will be, after all, but a poor proficient in Divine Knowledge, if he do not bring it home to his heart, and reduce it to practice. It is not ſpeculation, but practice and experience, which renders a man truly ſkilful in any buſineſs. So in Religion, no man can be truly wiſe and knowing, but he who liveth wiſely and virtuouſly. *If ye continue in my word* (ſaith our Lord, *Joh.* viii. 31.) *then ſhall you know the truth, and the truth ſhall make you free* [from the darkneſs of ignorance and error, and the ſervitude of abſurd luſts and paſſions.] *Joh.* vii. 27. *If any man will do his,* God's, *will, he ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.* [He ſhall ſee it in its true light, and be convinced that it is perfectly divine.] For (*Pſal.* xxv. 14.) *the ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will ſhew them his covenant.* But (*Dan.* xii. 10.) *the wicked ſhall do wickedly, and none of the wicked ſhall underſtand; but the wiſe,* [the pious and virtuous] *ſhall underſtand.*

This is to make you ſenſible, that a ſincere deſire of true knowledge is a neceſſary diſpoſition in entering upon the ſtudy of the Scriptures; and the obedience to God's commands, in the courſe of a pious life, is neceſſary to inlarge and eſtabliſh the judgment in the knowledge of divine truths.

III. To the effectual ſtudy of Scripture, it is neceſſary, that our minds and hearts be unbyaſſed, unprejudiced, open to the truth, and always quite free to diſcern and receive it. If our ſpirits are under the power of prepoſſeſſion and prejudice we cannot be well diſpoſed for ſearching the Scriptures. For inſtance, if a perſon, in matters of religion and conſcience, is ambitious to gain reputation in the world, or ſolicitous only to pleaſe and recommend himſelf to a party, how ſhould he ſtudy the word of God with the ſincere and ſingle view of diſcovering and embracing the truth, when he is preingaged, and all his care is to find what will pleaſe his fellow-creatures, and ſuit his own mean and ſelfiſh purpoſes? *Joh.* v. 44. *How can ye believe, who receive honor one of another,* whoſe ruling principle is the deſire of temporal honor, and the favor of men, *and ſeek not the honor, which comes from God only,* the honor of a good conſcience, and of upright conduct? Or, if we reſign our underſtandings and conſciences to the authority of human deciſions and decrees; or imbibe the bigotry of a party, which determines a perſon to retain pertinaciouſly a ſett of religious notions, without conſidering, or examining how far they are agreeable to the word of God, our underſtandings and judgments are locked up, and no longer at liberty to diſcover the truth.

It is owing to this malignant cauſe, that great numbers of learned men, who call themſelves Chriſtians, will not allow themſelves to make enquiry, whether the worſhip of ſaints, images, relicks, bread, and innumerable other abſurd doctrines, and ſuperſtitious practices, are agreeable to the truth and purity of the Chriſtian Religion. The error and

iniquity of this conduct in Papiſts we ſee and deteſt. But the ſame moral cauſe will in all caſes produce the ſame effects. If we act upon the ſame vicious principles; if we indulge the like prejudices, and in the ſame manner wilfully ſhut our eyes, we ſhall be more faulty than Papiſts, becauſe it is contrary to our profeſſion, as Proteſtants; and ſhall be equally incapable of ſeeing the truth and glory of our holy Religion. In ſtudying the Scriptures we ſhould always keep our minds open to evidence, and further diſcoveries of truth, which is the only way to be more and more ſolidly eſtabliſhed in our religious principles; for in no other way can we *grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Moreover, this is the only poſſible mean of reducing the Chriſtian world to unity both of hearts and ſentiments.

IV. Prayer to God, the Father of Lights, the Fountain of all Illumination, is neceſſary to the ſucceſsful ſtudy of the Scriptures. *Prov.* ii. 6. *The Lord* alone *gives wiſdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and underſtanding.* Nor hath he appointed any means, how excellent ſoever in themſelves, which exempt us from a dependence upon his bleſſing. All our ſprings are in him; and his gracious influences render our endeavours, of any kind, ſucceſsful. And therefore, when we addreſs ourſelves to the ſtudy of the holy Scriptures, we ſhould make our ſupplication to God, that he would *open* our *eyes, that* we *may behold wonderous things out of his law.* Or, in the Apoſtle's words, (*Epheſ.* i. 17, 18.) *that the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of Glory, would give unto us the ſpirit of wiſdom, and revelation, in the knowledge of him; that the eyes of our underſtanding being enlightened,* we may have juſt apprehenſions of the riches of his wiſdom and grace, and that our hearts may be duly impreſſed with a deep and laſting ſenſe of them.

CHAP. II.

Of the Divine Diſpenſations, in Scripture called the WAYS *and* WORKS *of* GOD.

THE *Ways of God* אלהים דרכי frequently ſignify the Rules of Life, which he hath given us to obſerve. *Pſal.* cxix. 3. *They alſo do no iniquity; they walk in his ways,* i. e. *in the law of the Lord,* ver. 1. And *the Works* מַעֲשִׂים *of God* may ſignify the meer operation and productions of his power. But both theſe words have a more reſtricted and emphatical ſignification. דֶּרֶךְ *a Way,* ſignifieth alſo a courſe of action, a cuſtom, conſtitution or inſtitution, which any perſon, or number of perſons form to themſelves. *Prov.* viii. 22. *The Lord poſſeſſed me,* Wiſdom, *in the begining of his Way, before his Works of old.* Prov. xii. 26. *The way of the wicked,* their courſe of action, *ſeduceth them.* Hoſ. x. 13. *Becauſe thou didſt truſt in thy way,* the ſchemes and methods,

methods, political or religious, of thy own deviſing, *and in the multitude of thy mighty men.* Amos viii. 14. *The manner*, the way, *i. e.* the religious conſtitution, *of Beerſheba liveth*, ſubſiſts, flouriſheth, notwithſtanding the oppoſition made to it. עָשָׂה ſignifies to conſtitute, ordain, appoint, diſpoſe. *Num.* xxviii. 6. 2 *Chron.* ii. 11. *Pſal.* civ. 19. *Eccl.* iii. 11.

Hence *Ways* and *Works* ſignify the appointments, conſtitutions, or Diſpenſations of God. By which are meant, "The ſchemes or methods deviſed or contrived by the wiſdom and goodneſs of God, to diſcover, or ſhew himſelf, his nature and will, his beneficence, holineſs and juſtice to the minds of his rational creatures, for their inſtruction, diſcipline and reformation, in order to promote their happineſs." Theſe are the great ends of the Divine Diſpenſations; and theſe the principal points to be attended to, in the explications of them.

The great God, for ever to be adored, hath actually given exiſtence to a world of moral agents, ſuch as we are. He therefore is our Father, and we are his offspring, whom he hath created in love, that in a right and virtuous uſe of our rational powers, we may be qualified for honor and enjoyment in the heavenly world. This ſeems to be the higheſt deſign the divine Goodneſs can form, and the higheſt excellency to which our nature can attain. And this may be conſidered as the baſis of all the Divine Diſpenſations from the begining of the world. For without pious and virtuous diſpoſitions we cannot be qualified for honor and enjoyment. But pious and virtuous diſpoſitions cannot be forced upon us, by any external power whatever; they muſt, in ſome degree, be the effect of our own attention and choice. It is, therefore, becoming the Father of our Spirits, and ſuitable to beings of our capacities and circumſtances, that proper means be provided for our inſtruction and diſcipline. For inſtance, as God is not the object of any of our ſenſes, and can be ſeen only by our underſtandings, it is proper that he ſhould ſet before us in the frame and furniture of the world, ſuch viſible and various diſplays of his Being, Power, Wiſdom, Juſtice, and kind Regards, as may engage our attention, diſcover his eternal Godhead, and lead us to the acknowledgment, adoration, love, and dutiful obedience of our Creator, Father, and Benefactor. Theſe are the works, the diſpenſations, or conſtitutions of Nature; whereby our Father, as in a glaſs held before our eyes and thoughts, has ſhewn himſelf to us for our inſtruction in piety and virtue.

But beſides the conſtitution of univerſal Nature, there are a variety of diſpenſations, which are more immediately relative to mankind. As the being born of parents, to ſupply the ſeveral generations of the world, whence reſult ſundry relations and duties; the being ſuſtained by food, covered and ſheltered by clothes and habitations, healed by phyſicians, taught by the learned and ſkilful; the infirmities, appetites, and paſſions of our conſtitution; the forming ſocieties for mutual help and commerce; the inſtitution of government, or the ſubordination of ſome to the authority of others, for preſerving good order, for the protection of virtue, and the reſtraint and puniſhment of vice. Add to theſe, wars, peſtilence,

ſtilence, famine, earthquakes, and ſuch like events; all theſe may be reckoned among the Divine Appointments, or Diſpenſations; ſome for the exerciſe of our rational powers in right action; ſome for diſcipline, correction, and reformation; but none merely for deſtruction, except where reformation cannot be effected.

But thoſe Ways, or Diſpenſations, which in Scripture are conſidered as the great hinges of Divine Providence, on which his dealings with mankind have turned; or as the principal events, by which the great purpoſes and councils of God's will have been executed, are chiefly to be attended unto. Becauſe right conceptions of theſe, under their ſeveral views, circumſtances, and connections, will greatly contribute to the explaining of Scripture-Theology, and alſo mark out the proper order and method, in which it may be ſtudied. Let us therefore here, at firſt ſeting out, take a general ſurvey of them.

I. The Creation of the World, as above.

II. The Formation of Man after the Image of God.

III. Man being created capable of enjoying the honours and felicity of heaven, was to be diſciplined and proved, in order to his being confirmed in the habits of virtue and holineſs; without which, neither man, nor any other rational being, can be fit to ſee, or enjoy, the Lord. Accordingly, the firſt moſt remarkable of God's works, in the newly created world, was to put the Man, whom he had formed, upon a trial ſuitable to his circumſtances.

IV. Under which trial, man, yielding to temptation, ſinned, and ſo became ſubjected to the threatening of eternal death.

V. Which heavy doom, God, not willing to deſtroy his creature, was pleaſed in mercy, not only to mitigate, but alſo, man having altered his moral ſtate, though fit to introduce a new diſpenſation of grace, in the hands of a Mediator. At the ſame time, ſubjecting the human race to a laborious life, to diſeaſes, and to death temporal. And this in much goodneſs, to ſubdue the fleſhly Principle, to give a taſte of the bitter fruits of ſin, to prevent the opportunities and occaſions of it; and, by increaſing the vanity of the creature, to turn his regards more ſteadily to the all-ſufficient Creator.

VI. But men multiplying in the earth abuſed the grace of God, and in about 1656 years time became ſo wicked, that *all fleſh had corrupted his way, and the earth was filled with violence.* Then, to purge the world from iniquity, and to recover it to a ſtate of righteouſneſs, God created a new thing in the earth, and, by a deluge of water, deſtroyed that wicked generation, preſerving the only Family, that remained uncorrupt in the old world, in order to propigate piety and virtue in the new. At the ſame time, and for the ſame good purpoſes, he reduced human life into much narrower bounds.

VII. Not long after the deluge, to prevent a ſecond general corruption, God introduced another diſpenſation, by confounding the language of mankind; which divided the world into ſeveral diſtinct ſocieties, and, conſequently, kept them under a ſtricter government, and better preſerved their liberties, than if the world had been one great Empire.

VIII. Thus the outrage of violence and rapine was, in a good meaſure, cured. But now mankind fall into a different iniquity, namely, that

that of idolatry; whereby, within 400 years after the flood, the worſhip and knowledge of the one ſupreme God was in danger of being utterly loſt. To prevent this, the divine wiſdom erected a new diſpenſation by calling *Abraham* from among his idolatrous kindred, and conſtituting his family the ſtorehouſe and ſtandard of divine knowledge. To them he ſpake and reveled himſelf at ſundry times, and in divers manners, and ſeparated them from the reſt of the world, by peculiar laws and religious ceremonies, to ſecure them from the idolatrous practices of their neighbours. Thus they became God's peculiar people, diſtinguiſhed above all other nations, but with a view to the future great benefit of all nations. And to this day, bleſſed be God, we experience the happy effects of this noble ſcheme, and owe to it both our Bible, and the very being of the Goſpel church.

IX. The family of *Abraham*, by the divine conduct, was led into *Egypt*. And when they had been there, under grievous oppreſſion, 215 years, and were grown numerous enough to be a nation, God ſet himſelf at the head of them, as their King. And, in a country much eſteemed for learning and arts, whither men of genius and curioſity reſorted from all other parts, upon this ſtage, ſo proper, becauſe ſo public, God, as the king of *Iſrael*, combated the king of *Egypt* and his fictitious gods, and diſplayed his infinitely ſuperior power both to deſtroy and to ſave, by many plagues inflicted upon the land of *Egypt*, and by bringing out the *Iſraelites* in oppoſition to all the forces of the king, and all the obſtacles of nature, and ſettling them, after they had been ſufficiently diſciplined in the wilderneſs, in the land of *Canaan*. Here God ſet up his peculiar kingdom amongſt them, and they alone of all the nations of the earth were the ſubjects of it, and happy in its ſingular privileges and bleſſings; but, at the ſame time, were exerciſed with various providential diſpenſations. The general rule of which was this; while they adhered to the worſhip of the true God, they were always proſperous, when they declined to idolatry, they were either oppreſſed at home, or carried captive into other countries.

X. The long captivity in *Babylon* was not only a puniſhment to the *Jews*, but alſo a mean of publiſhing the knowledge of the true God over all the *Babyloniſh* Empire, as appears very evidently in the Book of *Daniel*. And the diviſion of the *Grecian* empire, which put an end to the *Perſian*, after the death of *Alexander*, cauſed a new diſperſion of the *Jews*, eſpecially into *Aſia minor*, *Syria*, *Egypt*, *Cyrene*, and *Lybia*, where their ſynagogues were very common. And laſtly, when they were ſubjected to the *Roman* power, their God and religion became more known over all the *Roman* empire. Thus the way for the kingdom of the *Meſſiah* was gradually prepared. For though the knowledge of God, received from the *Jews*, made no public reformation of Pagan idolatry, yet it greatly diſpoſed men to receive the goſpel when it ſhould be preached unto them. Some became *Jews*, many renounced idolatry, and worſhipped no other but the living and true God, who, in the Acts of the apoſtles, are called, *devout Proſelytes*, *Greeks*, *thoſe that feared God*.

XI. Thus we are brought to the *coming of Chriſt*, who came *in the fulneſs of Time*; for he came as ſoon as God, by the various methods of his pro-

providence, had prepared the world to receive him. When God *had made ready a people prepared for him*, then Chriſt came, and fully explained the nature, laws, extent, and glory of the kingdom of God, and fulfilled the great and moſt excellent deſigns of divine wiſdom, by giving himſelf a ſacrifice and propitiation for the ſin of the world.

XII. Then the great myſtery of God, the calling of other nations, beſides the *Jews*, into his kingdom and church, was opened, and made maniſeſt by the preaching of the goſpel. For which purpoſe, he ſent out his apoſtles, furniſhed with proper powers and credentials, eſpecially the gift of tongues, whereby they were inabled to communicate the wonderful things of God to people of different countries. And by this means, the glad tidings of ſalvation, and the glorious light and privileges of the goſpel, have reached even to us in *Great-Britain*, who dwell in the uttermoſt parts of the earth.

XIII. But as *Chriſt* came to reſtore, to explain, and by the moſt glorious diſcoveries, and the richeſt promiſes, to inforce the law of nature, the true religion of all nations; and conſequently, as his deſign was to erect an univerſal religion, which ſhould recommend itſelf to all people, under their ſeveral political diſtinctions, and which, therefore, was to interfere with no political eſtabliſhments, but ſhould leave them, in every country, juſt as it found them, teaching the nations only to obſerve the eternal rules of righteouſneſs in the hope of eternal life; I ſay, upon this grand, noble, and extenſive plan, the *Jewiſh* polity would be ſunk to a level with all other national governments; and the *Jew*, on account of any prior national advantages, would have no more claim to the bleſſings and privileges of the kingdom of God, than any of the *Gentiles*, or nations, who, in any of the moſt barbarous and deſpiſed parts of the earth, ſhould receive the faith of the goſpel. For in the chriſtian religion *there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumciſion nor uncircumciſion, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Chriſt*, i. e. the faith and obedience, or true religion, which Chriſt taught, *is all, and in all*, Col. iii. 11. Thus the *Jew* is fallen from his ſuperior claims and privileges; and he falls by that very method of divine wiſdom and grace, which brought ſalvation to all other nations. Thus *the diminiſhing of the Jews is the riches of the world, and the caſting away of them is the reconciling of the world*, (Rom. xi. 12, 15.) or the opening a door for the whole world to come into the peculiar kingdom of God.

This is the idea we ought to have of the rejection of the *Jews*. The grace of God was, and ſtill is, as free to them as to other people, upon their embracing the goſpel; but their political conſtitution from hence forth gave them no diſtinction, or privileges in the kingdom of God above the reſt of mankind. And in no long time after the publication of the goſpel, their polity and civil conſtitution, which otherwiſe would have remained in full force, and have obliged them to obey its laws, as much as the conſtitutions of the other kingdoms of the world obliged their ſeveral ſubjects, was quite overthrown, by the deſtruction of the temple, and the expulſion of the *Jews* out of the land of *Canaan*. Which they have not been able to recover, but remain diſperſed over the face of the whole earth to this day. Thus the goſpel diſpenſation was erected, and ſpread and prevailed every where.

XIV. The

XIV. The next of God's works was the permiting and managing a grand apoſtacy and corruption of religion in the chriſtian church, foretold by the Apoſtles, and at large in the book of the Revelation. After the apoſtles were removed out of the world, it pleaſed God to leave the profeſſors of the goſpel, in matters of religion, to their own ignorance, paſſions and prepoſſeſſions. Thus the chriſtian faith, by degrees, was depraved; till the *Man of Sin* aroſe, a tyrannical, uſurped power, domineering over, and impoſing upon conſcience, forbiding the uſe of underſtanding, and intoxicating the inhabiters of the earth with falſe and deluſive learning, worldly pomp and ſplendor, religious ſorcery, and cruel perſecution of the truth. This, as it was the propereſt mean of producing the moſt eminent and nobleſt characters, was to be a long and ſevere trial of the faith and patience of the ſaints. In the times of this ſad diſpenſation, it is certain, we are now living; but, we hope, towards the latter end of it. Through the whole courſe of it God hath variouſly appeared, both in wrath upon the corrupters of religion, and in mercy for the comfort and ſupport of thoſe who oppoſed it. And thus the wheels of providence moved on, till the morning of reformation appeared in our happy land, which, for ſome centuries, hath been gradually advancing, and ſtill continues to advance, towards the perfect day. For a ſpirit of religious liberty, which hath been long oppreſſed, revives and gains ſtrength, the ſcriptures are more carefully ſtudied, eccleſiaſtical tyranny and perſecution, under every form, more generally deteſted; and things ſeem to have a tendency towards love, unity, and concord, the moſt perfect ſtate of religion in this world.

XV. This muſt give pleaſure to every good man, and he will chearfully join his endeavours to bring on the next glorious diſpenſation, which we have in proſpect, when the *myſtery of God*, with regard to the aforeſaid corrupt ſtate of religion, *ſhall be finiſhed*, when *Babylon*, in all its principles and powers, ſhall fall; when *the holy city, the new Jeruſalem*, ſhall come down from Heaven, and God ſhall ſet up a pure and happy ſtate of the church.

XVI. How long that ſtate will continue, we do not certainly know. Nor have we any further clear diſcoveries of God's works till the awful day of the reſurrection, when the Lord himſelf ſhall in perſon deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and the trump of God. *Then all they that ſleep in the duſt of the earth ſhall awake*, and ſhall be judged, *ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome to ſhame and everlaſting contempt. And they that be wiſe*, under any of the changes and diſpenſations of this preſent world, *ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament, and they that* work together with God, and endeavour to *turn many to righteouſneſs, as the ſtars for ever and ever.*

Thus I have given a ſketch of the works of God from the begining of the world to the conſummation of all things. And very beautiful and ſurprizing would the whole appear, could we ſee them in a full and clear light. But before we attempt a more particular explication of them in their ſeveral views, circumſtances, and connections, we muſt make a few general remarks, which will aſſiſt our conceptions and enquiries,

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

GENERAL REMARKS *upon the* DIVINE DISPENSATIONS.

CONCERNING the foregoing diſpenſations, we may, in general, remark, that as they are deviſed and executed by God—

I. They are all agreable to the moſt perfect rules of righteouſneſs and truth. Nothing falſe, unjuſt, or injurious, can be charged upon the divine conſtitutions. For (*Deut.* xxxii. 4.) *all* God's *ways are judgment; a God of truth, and without iniquity; juſt and right is he.* Pſal. cxlv. 17. *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy,* ſteadily acting according to truth, *in all his works.* See alſo *Rev.* xv. 3. And therefore they are in perfect conſiſtence with each other.

II. The ways of God are not to be conſidered as the effect of neceſſity, as if the end propoſed could not poſſibly have been otherwiſe gained; but as the reſult of wiſe choice, or divine prudence, prefering ſuch particular methods as preferable to any other; as beſt adapted to our circumſtances, or, all things conſidered, as the moſt likely to make mankind wiſe and happy. For inſtance, it is by the diſpenſation of God, that our preſent life is ſuſtained by food; not becauſe it is impoſſible we ſhould live in any other way, for God could ſuſtain our life in perfect health and ſtrength by an act of his own immediate power. Again, our food is produced by the influence of the ſun, by rain, the fertility of the ground, human labor and ſkill; not becauſe food could not be otherwiſe produced, for God could, by an immediate act of his own power, create food for us every day, as he did for the *Iſraelites* in the wilderneſs; but this method of ſuſtaining our life is a contrivance of divine wiſdom; to ſhew himſelf to our underſtandings, (for had we been ſuſtained by an immediate act of divine power, we ſhould have been led to imagine, that, not God, but our own nature, had ſuſtained itſelf,) and to exerciſe our virtue and induſtry in providing a ſubſiſtence, and to be mutually helpful to each other. Hence the works of God, in ſcripture, are aſſigned to his wiſdom. See *Pſal.* civ. 24. *Prov.* viii. 22. *Epheſ.* i. 5, *&c.*—iii. 9, 10.

III. Aſſuredly all the diſpenſations of God are calculated to promote virtue and happineſs. This is the line which runs through the whole, as will appear in our future enquiries into the nature and tendencies of each of them. At preſent it may ſuffice to obſerve, that however our circumſtances may differ from thoſe of our firſt parents, the end of our being is the ſame as theirs; and we, as well as they, are upon trial, in order to our having the habits of holineſs formed in us, and our being fited for eternal life. And though it is a ſad reflection to conſider, how the wickedneſs of men, hath from time to time fatigued the patience of God, yet it muſt give us pleaſure to obſerve, how his goodneſs hath applied various remedies to prevent, or heal, the corruptions of mankind. In what way ſoever men have gone aſtray from him, his wiſdom has never been at loſs to find out the moſt proper expedients to reclaim.

Evidently

Evidently his deſign is to ſave a ſinful world, and to carry religion both in its perſonal influences, and general prevalence, to the higheſt perfection our preſent condition will admit*.

IV. The ſcriptural diſpenſations, which have been enumerated, were ſeverally adapted to the then capacities and improvements, the moral ſtate and circumſtances of mankind. The ſeveral ages of the world may be compared to the ſeveral ſtages of human life, infancy, youth, manhood, and old age. Now, as a man under due culture gradually improves in knowledge and wiſdom, from infancy to old age, ſo we may conceive of the world, from the begining to the end, as gradually improving in mental and religious attainments under the ſeveral divine diſpenſations†. Which diſpenſations have been in every period ſuited to the improvements in knowledge and wiſdom, which then ſubſiſted in the world. *Adam*, when created, may be conſidered as a child without knowledge, learning, and experience; and therefore the diſpenſation he was under, was very different from that, which we are under, who enjoy the benefit and light of ſo many preceding diſpenſations.

Corollary. *A preceding diſpenſation is intended and adapted to introduce and prepare for that which comes after it.* Experience is a natural and certain mean of improving in knowledge and wiſdom. This is univerſally true, as well with regard to communities as ſingle perſons. It is therefore agreeable to the nature of things, that in a progreſſive courſe of knowledge, and moral improvement, what we already have experienced ſhould be a ſtep to further advances; and conſequently, in a juſt plan or ſcheme of diſcipline, it is fit, that what goes before, ſhould be adapted to clear and eſtabliſh what is to come after. Thus mankind, reflecting upon preceding diſpenſations, will be admoniſhed and directed to reform old errors and corruptions; and thus, even the monſterous apoſtacy of the church of *Rome* may ſerve to introduce and eſtabliſh that moſt perfect ſtate of chriſtianity, which we expect will ſucceed the diſpenſation we are now under.

V. All God's diſpenſations are in a moral way, and adapted to the nature of rational agents. *Exod.* xiii. 17. Force and co-action deſtroy the

* Now, if ſuch a deſign ſhall appear evidently to run through the Books of the Old and New Teſtament, a man may, with infinitely greater propriety, ſuppoſe the moſt perfect drama (where the fineſt deſign is carried on by the beſt choſen plot, and by the moſt conſiſtent underplots, and beautiful, well-proportioned incidents) to have been writ by a number of the greateſt madmen or idiots, by piece-meal, in different ages; than imagine a thread of ſuch an end and mean runing through above 40 writers, in more than 1600 years, to be the work of ſo many enthuſiaſts. Or, we may as well ſuppoſe the world to be framed by mere chance; or the moſt magnificent, beautiful, and convenient palace, that the imagination can figure to itſelf, to be built by men unacquainted with all the rules of architecture, in ſeveral diſtant ages, and without any model to build by, and to be ſupported by meer chance, through as many more; as imagine ſuch an unity of deſign and mean, as I have deſcribed, to be the reſult of enthuſiaſm and accident mixed together. *Ld. Barrington's Eſſay on the Div. Diſpenſations. Part.* I. *Preface, p.* 26.

† Ages of a Man. 6. 16. 20. 30. 40. 50. 60. 70.
Ages of the World. 600. 1600. 2000. 3000. 4000. 5000. 6000. 7000.

the very nature of holineſs; and therefore all divine methods of reformation are ſo wiſely adjuſted, as to leave human actions in their proper ſtate of freedom. By none of his works did God ever intend to render wickedneſs impracticable; and he hath always provided ſufficient ſupports for integrity and virtue. With this very ſentiment prophecy in *Daniel* and in the Revelation is ſealed up. *Rev.* xxii. 11. *He that is unjuſt, let him be unjuſt ſtill; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill.* That is to ſay, there is no cure for the obſtinately blind and wicked; neither are the ways of God intended to purify thoſe, who will not be made clean; but, after all that God hath done, *the wicked* (Dan. xii. 10.) *ſhall* be left to *do wickedly. And none of the wicked will underſtand, but* only *the wiſe will underſtand. But he that is righteous, let him be righteous ſtill; and he that is holy, let him be holy ſtill.* *Hoſ.* xiv. 9. *Who is wiſe, and* [for] *he ſhall underſtand theſe things? Prudent, and* [for] *he ſhall know them? For the ways of Jehovah are right; and the juſt ſhall walk in them; but the tranſgreſſors ſhall fall in them.* The ſincere and upright, who chooſe the way of truth, or turn from ſin unto righteouſneſs, the righteous and merciful God will never forſake. They make a wiſe improvement of his diſpenſations, and, under all trials and difficulties, he will guide and ſupport them; and their path ſhall be as the ſhining light, that ſhineth more and more to the perfect day.

COROLLARY. *Hence we may conclude—That in computing the progreſs of religion, under any diſpenſation, the quantity of knowledge and religion is to be meaſured only by the improvement of the righteous; and that the wicked, how many ſoever, are not to be taken into the account, as making any deductions from it.* Or, the advances of knowledge and religion, under any diſpenſation, are not to be eſtimated by numbers, but by the proficiency of ſingle perſons, how few ſoever. *Noah*, a ſingle perſon, was, at the time of the deluge, the true ſtandard of religious improvement in that age; though all the reſt of mankind were exceeding corrupt and wicked.

VI. *Known unto God are all his works from the begining of the world*, ſaith the apoſtle *James*, *Acts* xv. 18. Then all God's works were formed and planned in his counſels, and lay under his eye in one comprehenſive view; and therefore muſt be perfectly conſiſtent. One uniform ſcheme muſt be laid, and one even thread of deſign muſt run through the whole. They are not the reſult of ſudden, incoherent thoughts; but a well digeſted plan, formed upon the moſt juſt principles by him, who ſeeth all his works from the begining to the end. Whence it follows, that if we do not diſcern one coherent deſign in the divine diſpenſations, or if we make any one part claſh with the reſt, we may be ſure we do not underſtand them. Goodneſs was the principle of creation. God made man becauſe he delighted to communicate being and happineſs. Conſequently, goodneſs and fatherly love, which was the begining and foundation of God's works, muſt run equally through them all, from firſt to laſt.

VII. Previous notice was given of ſome of the principal diſpenſations, either for warning, or to prepare men for the reception of them. The deluge was preached by *Noah* 120 years before it came to paſs. The Jewiſh diſpenſation was predicted to *Abraham* 430 years beforehand. *Jeremiah* foretold the Babyloniſh captivity; and *Paul*, and *John* at large, predict

predict and deſcribe the grand apoſtacy. But the coming of the *Meſſiah*, and the goſpel diſpenſation, run through the whole, from the begining to the end, in a leſs or clearer degree of light. And it was fiting that this, which is the chief of God's works, ſhould receive the brighteſt evidence from prophecy. And therefore it was not fit it ſhould be introduced till ſuch time as it had received that evidence; which in ſcripture is called *the fulneſs of time*. Gal. iv. 4.

VIII. The diſpenſations of God are intended for our contemplation and ſtudy; and it is a ſingular advantage to form right notions of them, becauſe they will tincture our conceptions of God, and influence our diſpoſitions towards him. If we judge truly of God's works, we ſhall have agreable and lovely ideas of the workman. His wiſdom, his goodneſs and truth, will ſtand in a fair light, and we ſhall confeſs him infinitely worthy of our higheſt regard. Then we ſhall think of God with admiration, pleaſure and delight, (*Pſal.* xcii. 4. *Thou, Lord, haſt made me glad through thy work; I will triumph in the works of thy hands.*) and ſhall ſerve and follow him with willing minds. But if we form ſuch conceptions of the ways of God, as repreſent them to be arbitrary and tyrannical, inconſiſtent with all our notions of juſtice and goodneſs, the effect of ſovereign will, without either reaſon or love, he muſt ſtand before our thoughts in the moſt frightful colors. The moſt horrible gloom will be drawn over the perfections of the beſt of beings, our minds will be filled with darkneſs and dread; and, if we worſhip him at all, our worſhip and obedience will not be the free and generous duty of ſons, but the joyleſs conſtrained drudgery of ſlaves.

IX. It muſt be remembered, that the works of God are unſearchable, and paſt our finding out to perfection. *Pſal.* xcii. 5. *O Lord, how great are thy works, and thy thoughts are very deep!* From a juſt ſenſe of the inſcrutability of the divine diſpenſations, the apoſtle concludes a diſcourſe upon the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, with this ſolemn exclamation; *O the depth of the riches, both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! How unſearchable are his judgements, and his ways paſt finding out!* Rom. xi. 33. It becomes us to admire and adore the counſels of infinite wiſdom, and to acquieſce where we cannot gain a full knowledge of them. *Rev.* xv. 3. *Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty!* We cannot comprehend the ways of God in their fulleſt extent, in all their largeſt views, and remoteſt connections. He therefore that is wiſe will not cavil at them, nor fooliſhly endeavour to pry into them beyond the bounds of revelation, and of human underſtanding.

X. But under all our preſent darkneſs, and under every diſpenſation, an honeſt heart, ſincerely deſirous to know the truth, ſeriouſly inquiſitive after it, meekly ſubmiſſive to what God hath reveled and commanded, willing to work together with him, patiently perſevering in well doing; ſuch a temper, and ſuch a conduct, is the beſt and ſafeſt guide under every diſpenſation; will enable us to follow God, to comply with every deſign of his providence, to overcome in every hour of trial, and will lead us to eternal life. To ſuch a character, as well as to *Daniel*, (Chap. xii. 13.) it is the language of divine grace—*But walk thou*, thou honeſt, upright man, *walk thou thy way to the end*, take courage and

comfort, walk on, perſevere in the path of truth and integrity; *for*, after all the trials and diſquietudes of this world, *thou ſhalt reſt, and ſtand in thy lot*, the lot of pious and faithful ſouls, *at the end of the days*.

CHAP. IV.

Of the CREATION.

Gen. I. 1.—26.

THIS is the work of creation. To *create* is to give Being to that which did not exiſt before; and ſo, is no contradiction. That a thing ſhould *be and not be at the ſame time*, is a contradiction and impoſſibility; but that a thing ſhould exiſt now, which did not exiſt before, is no more a contradiction, than that my hand ſhould move now, which did not move before.

That there is one firſt uncauſed Cauſe, from which all other beings derive their exiſtence, and upon whom they have their entire dependence, hath already been proved. Conſequently, all beings, except the firſt Cauſe, muſt have been produced, or brought into being by the power and agency of the firſt Cauſe. Not produced, out of nothing, but out of nothing beſides the immenſe and unconceivable fullneſs of the ſelf-exiſtent Being, who muſt have in himſelf the power and poſſibility of all being; though we cannot comprehend or conceive in what manner, or by what kind of agency, he createth or communicateth exiſtence to beings diſtinct from himſelf.

Of the Creation of all things, *Moſes* in this chapter has given us a ſummary account; not in a preciſe philoſophical manner, but ſo as to give the men of that age, in which he wrote, juſt and affecting notions of this firſt, and moſt ſtupendous work of God, ſo far as was neceſſary to the purpoſes of true religion, and no further. It is enough, therefore, that his account is true, ſo far as it goes, and not in any reſpect inconſiſtent with the moſt accurate diſcoveries, which have been made in later ages concerning the ſyſtem of the univerſe, or any part of it.

Ver. 1. *In the begining*, &c. *The heavens and the earth* may comprehend the whole univerſe, or *all things viſible and inviſible*. It doth not therefore follow, that the whole univerſe was created all together at once, or at ſome one period of time. But the meaning is this; at firſt, when the univerſe was produced, it was brought into being by the ſole power and wiſdom of the almighty and eternal God. This is true, though the ſeveral parts of the univerſe may have been produced at different times, or at any diſtance of time from each other; and though God may ſtill be creating new worlds in the immenſe boſom of ſpace, which is not improbable; I ſay, it is true, that in the begining of their exiſtence, whenever that was, God created, and is ſtill creating, them all.

The

The ſentiment, which *Moſes*, I apprehend, would inculcate being this, that the whole univerſe of beings, whenever created, doth not exiſt by neceſſity or chance; but had a begining, and was produced by the ſole power of God.

But, as *Moſes* here gives us a particular account of the formation of our earth, this phraſe, *in the begining*, may have a ſpecial reference to the time, when our earth was created. The matter, of which it conſiſts, was produced in the ſtate of a *Chaos*, (Ver. 2.) *without form and void*, i. e. ſhapeleſs, waſte, and uſeleſs; all the parts, ſolids and fluids, jumbled together, and ſurrounded with darkneſs, unadorned, uninhabited. But *the ſpirit of God moved upon the face of the waters*; i. e. the influences and exertions of the divine power actuated this dark, confuſed maſs, and digeſted, and reduced its parts to the beautiful ſtate and order in which we now behold them.

On the firſt day, and the firſt thing after the production of the *Chaos*, the element of light was created. *Ver.* 3, 4, 5.

On the ſecond day was created the element of air, or that body of air, which we call the Atmoſphere, רָקִיעַ *the firmament*, or rather, ſpacious expanſion of air, where the fowls do fly, (Ver. 20.) and which is ſpread abroad above, and all round the earth, including meteors and clouds, which are the waters above, or at the upper part of, the atmoſphere, in contradiſtinction to the waters of the ſea and rivers, which are under it. *Ver.* 6, 7, 8.

On the third day the great God formed the element of water, by draining off the fluids of the *Chaos*, and cauſing them to flow into large cavities, prepared to receive them; that thus the earth might become one firm, compact, voluble globe, and in a fit condition to produce graſs, herbs, trees, and plants, which were then created. *Ver.* 9, 10, 11, 12.

On the fourth day God created the ſun and moon. *Ver.* 14—19. The ſun being the centre of our ſyſtem, it ſeems probable, that the whole ſolar ſyſtem was produced at the ſame time with the earth, though the deſign of the writer did not lead him to take notice of the other parts of it. But we have no juſt ground, from his account, to ſuppoſe, that all the ſtars, which are probably each of them the centre of a diſtinct ſyſtem, were, on this day, all of them created. Moſt of them might have been created long before, and ſome of them ſince, our world came into being. For that clauſe (Ver. 16.) *he made the ſtars alſo*, in the Hebrew is no more than, *and the ſtars*; the words, *he made*, being inſerted by the tranſlators. And therefore it may be well rendered thus—*Ver.* 16. *And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the leſſer light to rule the night with the ſtars.* That is to ſay, *the moon and ſtars to rule the night*, as it is expreſſed, *Pſal.* cxxxvi. 9. The conjunction ו ſometimes hath the force of the prepoſition *with*; as *Gen.* iv. 20. *With his weapons.* 2 *King.* xi. 8. *Jer.* xxii. 7. *&c.*

Hitherto our globe, and perhaps the other planets, might, by the power of God, be ſuſpended in the empty ſpace, in a ſtate of reſt. But now, when the ſun, the centre of our ſyſtem, was created, and the earth was reduced to a proper ſtate of firmneſs and ſolidity, they might be thrown into thoſe regular and rapid motions, about the ſun,

and their own centres, which, by the ſame power impreſſed upon them, continue to this day; and by their exact periodical revolutions produce that grateful and neceſſary variety of day and night and ſeaſons; namely, ſpring and ſummer, autumn and winter; which are certainly the effect of the annual and diurnal motions of the earth; and therefore the annual and diurnal motions might on this day commence. *Ver.* 14.

On the fifth day fiſh and fowl; on the ſixth day beaſts and man were created. *Ver.* 20, *&c.*

There is one difficulty remaining, namely, that *light* was created before the ſun, *Ver.* 3, 14, *&c.* Whereas the ſun is ſuppoſed to be the ſole fountain of light, by emitting luminous particles from its body. But I ſuſpect the truth of this hypotheſis; and *Moſes* may be found a more accurate philoſopher than is commonly imagined. It appears from electrical experiments, that light is a diſtinct ſubſtance from all other, as much as air is from water; and that, by being properly excited, it may be made to appear in midnight darkneſs. Which ſhews, that it did exiſt in that darkneſs, previouſly to its being excited; and that it was rendered viſible by being excited. Conſequently it may, and, I doubt not, doth exiſt, expanded through the whole viſible ſyſtem of things at all times, by night as well as by day; and that the ſun, a fiery body, is, in our ſyſtem, the great exciter, by which the ſubſtance of light is impelled, and becomes viſible. For were there no ſubſtance of light previouſly exiſting throughout the whole ſyſtem, no light would appear, though ten thouſand ſuns ſhould at once be placed in our hemiſphers. Juſt as the ringing of the bell produces ſound, not by an emanation of particles from the ſubſtance of the bell, but by exciting the air, or the ſounding ſubſtance, without which the bell could produce no ſound at all. As the air will not ſound, ſo the light will not appear without being excited*. Upon this ſup-

* This hypotheſis, I preſume, doth not interfere with any rules of optics, the rays of light being *excited* according to the ſame laws and directions, by which they are ſuppoſed to be *emited*. The light of a candle, upon an eminence, may be ſeen at leaſt three miles at ſea, in a dark night. Therefore, according to the common ſuppoſition, the flame of a candle, ſuppoſe of one inch diameter, muſt emit from its body inſtantaneouſly, and in every inſtant, while it continues to burn, as much luminous matter, or ſubſtance, as will fill a ſpherical ſpace of ſix miles in diameter, or of 113,0976 cubical miles. Which, notwithſtanding the diviſibility of matter, *in infinitum*, ſeems to me, to be incredible. It is ſurely more probable and rational to ſuppoſe, that the extremely agile particles of light, which fill that large ſpace, are actuated, or excited inſtantaneouſly by the luminous body.

N. B. Dr. Taylor, ſome time after he had finiſhed this ſcheme of ſcripture divinity, met with the ſame thought and reaſoning in the ingenious author of Nature Displayed; and was not a little pleaſed to find an hypotheſis, which he judged peculiar to himſelf, adopted by ſo deep an inquirer into nature.

That the curious reader may compare the paſſages, he is preſented with the following extract.

"— * Light is viſibly pre-exiſtent to luminous bodies; this may ſeem a "paradox at firſt ſight, but it is not therefore a leſs evident truth. — By light we

* Vol. III. Page 409. Second Edition.

ſuppoſition the element or ſubſtance of light was created on the firſt day, and the divine power alone might be the exciter, which made the light appear

" we do not mean that ſenſation which we experience in ourſelves, on the " preſence of any illuminated body, but that inconceivably ſubtle matter, " which makes an impreſſion on the organs of ſight, and paints on the optic " nerve thoſe objects from the ſurfaces of which it was reflected to us. Light " then, taken in this ſenſe, is a body quite different from the ſun, and inde- " pendent on it, and might have exiſted before it, ſeeing now it does exiſt in " its abſence, as well as when preſent. It is diffuſed from one end of the " Creation to the other, traverſes the whole univerſe, forms a communi- " cation between the moſt remote ſpheres, penetrates into the inmoſt receſſes " of the earth, and only waits to be put in a proper motion to make itſelf vi- " ſible. — Light is to the eye what the air is to the ear: Air may not be " called the body of ſound, and it does equally exiſt all round us, though there " be no ſonorous body to put it in motion; ſo likewiſe the light does equally " extend at all times, from the moſt diſtant fixed ſtars to us, though it then " only ſtrikes our eyes, when impelled by the ſun, or ſome other maſs of " fire.

" The difference betwixt the propagation of ſound and light conſiſts in " this, that the air, which is the vehicle of ſound, being, beyond all compa- " riſon, more denſe than the vehicle of light, its motion is much ſlower. " Hence we may account for that common phœnomenon, why we do not hear " the ſound of the firſt ſtroke of a hammer, when at a diſtance from it, till it " is at the point of giving the following blow; whereas light is propagated " with incredible ſwiftneſs, though at ſome ſmall diſtance of time between " its receiving the impulſe, and its communicating it to us; ſeven minutes, " according to Sir Isaac Newton's calculation, being ſufficient for its paſ- " ſage from the fixed ſtars down to us. This difference of velocity between " the progreſſive motion of light, and that of ſound, is ſenſibly demonſtrated " by firing a gun in a large open plain, where the ſpectator, at a great diſtance " from it, will perceive the flaſh a conſiderable time before he hears the " noiſe.

" The body of light therefore does either exiſt independently of the lumi- " nous body, and only waits to receive a direct impulſe from it, in order to " act upon the organ of viſion; or we muſt ſuppoſe that every luminous body, " whether it be the ſun, a candle, or a ſpark, does produce this light from " itſelf, and project it to a great diſtance from its own body. There is no " medium between theſe two ſuppoſitions, and either the one or the other " muſt be true. But to aſſert the latter, is to aſſert a very great improbabi- " lity; for if a ſpark, which is ſeen in every part of a large room, fifty cubick " feet in dimenſions, emits from its own ſubſtance a quantity of light ſuffici- " ent to fill the whole room, then there muſt iſſue from that ſpark, which is " but a point, a body, the contents of which are fifty cubick feet. How in- " credible the ſuppoſition!

" Suppoſe the lanthorn, on the light-houſe of *Meſſina*, to be ſeen only eight " cubick leagues, of which itſelf is the centre; it will follow, that an " eye placed in any point of thoſe ſix cubick leagues will diſcern it, and " conſequently ſo much ſpace will be filled with the light of it. Now how " incredible that a little fire, ſome few inches in diameter, ſhould diffuſe " around it a ſubſtance capable of filling eight cubick leagues! Suppoſe the " the lanthorn concealed, and the light immediately diſappears; let it be un- " covered the moment after, and it will inſtantly be ſeen as far as before, and " conſe-

appear for the three firſt days of creation, until the ſun, the inſtrumental exciter, was produced.

Further, we muſt remark, that although God is here ſaid to create the world, yet it may be true, that he employed a ſubordinate agent in the formation of it; namely, the Son of God, who afterwards came into the world for the redemption of mankind. See *John* i. 2, 3. *Col.* i. 15. 16, 17. 1 *Cor.* viii. 5, 6. But though he was the inſtrumental cauſe, yet it is true, that God made all things, becauſe our Lord acted by a power derived from him. *He that hath built all things is God,* Heb. iii. 4.

So much for critical remarks. The ſubject naturally leads to the following reflections.

" Theſe are thy glorious Works, Parent of Good!
" Almighty, thine this univerſal Frame,
" Thus wonderous fair; thyſelf how wonderous then!

How wonderous, how immenſe is the power, goodneſs, and wiſdom, which gave exiſtence to the ſtupendous fabric and furniture of the univerſe!

I. Power. How vaſt and mighty is the arm, which *ſtretched out the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth!* Which ſuſtains numberleſs worlds, of amazing bulk, ſuſpended in the unmeaſurable and unconceivably diſtant regions of empty ſpace; and ſteadily directs their various rapid and regular motions! *Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created all theſe things. He bringeth out all their hoſts by number, he calleth them all by names, by the greatneſs of his might, for that he is ſtrong in Power, not one of them faileth.* Iſaiah xl. 26. How powerful was the command, *Let there be light, and there was light—Let there be a firmament,* &c. *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hoſt of them by the breath of his mouth. For he ſpake, and it was done; he commanded,*

" conſequently fill eight eight cubick leagues of ſpace with freſh light; then " how many times eight cubick leagues of luminous matter, will all the ſucceſſive inſtants of illumination produce in one night's time! Sure nothing " was ever more inconceivable.

" On the contrary, how ſimple and natural is it to ſuppoſe, that as the air " exiſted before the bell that put it in motion, and cauſed it to vibrate into " ſound, ſo in like manner, the light exiſted round the fire of *Meſſina*, before " the lanthorn was illuminated, and only waited to be put in motion, by the " fire, in order to make an impreſſion on the eyes of the mariners. The ſun " and ſtars do, by the ſame means, make themſelves viſible, without ſuffering " any diminution of their ſubſtance, by continual emanations of luminous " matter into thoſe vaſt regions of ſpace through which we behold them; " God having placed between thoſe luminous globes and us, the body of " that light which we ſee, and which is impreſſed on the organs of vilion, " by their action and influence; but does not proceed from them, nor owes " its exiſtence to them. —— The account of *Moſes* therefore, as to this par- " ticular, is agreeable to truth, as well as an uſeful leſſon of caution, when " he informs us, that God, and not the ſun, was the author and parent of " light, and that it was created by his almighty fiat, before there was a ſun " to dart it on one part of the earth, and a moon to reflect it on the other."

manded, and it ſtood faſt. Pſal. xxxiii. 6, 9. Thus the ſcriptures ſublimely expreſs the exertion of the divine Power in Creation; as if it were done inſtantaneouſly, and with as little difficulty, as ſpeaking a word.

II. And as for Goodness, what an infinite fulneſs of life and being, what an immenſe, inexhauſtible treaſury of all Good, muſt that be, from whence all this life and being was derived! How infinitely rich is the glorious and eternal God! Out of his own fulneſs he hath brought worlds and worlds, repleniſhed with myriads and myriads of creatures, furniſhed with various powers and organs, capacities and inſtincts; and out of his own fulneſs continually and plentifully ſupplieth them with all the neceſſaries of exiſtence. And ſtill his fulneſs remaineth the ſame, unemptied, unimpaired; and he can yet bring out of his fulneſs worlds and worlds without end. How immenſely full of all life and being is the glorious and eternal God! Thus he is good in himſelf. And *he doth good.* He is kind and beneficent, willing to communicate being and good. How profuſe is his bounty! He might have kept, as I may ſay, the whole of exiſtence to himſelf; but he has liberally ſhared it out among his creatures; and of all his creatures in this world, the moſt liberally to us men. Survey the whole of what may be ſeen in and about this globe, and ſay, if our Maker hath a ſparing and niggardly hand. Say, if we have a churliſh and unkind father. Certainly it is his pleaſure to form creatures, and furniſh them with enjoyment; and therefore *his tender mercies* muſt be *over all his works.*

III. His Wisdom appears illuſtrious in the variety, beauty, exactneſs, order, and harmony, in which God hath formed and fixed the univerſe; in the ſeveral capacities and degrees of excellence he has confered upon his creatures; the proper ſtations he hath aſſigned to them; the ſubordination and ſubſerviency of one to another, which he hath eſtabliſhed, for the regularity and well-being of the whole. They are all, as they come out of his hands, juſt what they ſhould be, adjuſted in the exacteſt proportions to their ſeveral ends and connections; all in every part and reſpect ſhewing the workmanſhip of the profoundeſt ſkill, and moſt curious art. The utmoſt ſtretch of human underſtanding can reach but a ſmall part of God's works; but they who ſtudy the wiſdom of Creation, cannot but admire, and uſe the words of the ſacred penman, *Pſal.* civ. 24. (where he is ſurveying the ſeveral parts of our globe) *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In Wiſdom haſt thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches!*

Theſe reflections will (1.) inſpire the moſt elevated ſentiments of the moſt high and mighty Creator, who *is exalted* infinitely *above the heavens, his glory is above all the earth,* Pſal. cviii. 5. *The Lord our God is very great, he is clothed with honour and majeſty*; and we ſhould ſtudy to magnify him in our hearts by the moſt raiſed conceptions of his tranſcending greatneſs. (2.) This ſhould alſo fill our minds with joy, and our mouths with his high praiſes. This God is our God, our maker, and therefore our father. The firſt and moſt proper notion we ought to entertain of the great God is, that of a Father; our Father, and the Father of the whole univerſe. And greatly ſhould we be delighted with the diſplays of our Father's infinite power, wiſdom, and goodneſs. Tranſ-

ported with joy, by an elegant proſopopœia, the Pſalmiſt, in the 148th Pſalm, calls upon all creatures to praiſe God; wiſhing, in effect, that they had all of them underſtandings and tongues to declare, how much ſkill and kindneſs he has ſhewn in their formation and eſtabliſhment. Joy and praiſe are the Creator's due, and ſhould be our conſtant temper and practice. (3.) He who is the maker, is alſo the abſolute proprietor, Lord, and Sovereign of all things; and therefore hath the firſt and higheſt right to our reverence, ſubmiſſion, and obedience. In which he is infinitely able to ſupport us in oppoſition to all human power and authority. For *all Power*, not only his own inherent power, but alſo the Power of all created beings, *belongs to God*. From him it is originally derived, and the exerciſe of it depends entirely upon his will and pleaſure; nor in any inſtance, can it poſſibly act beyond the limits which he preſcribes. Therefore, in the way of duty, relying upon his allſufficiency, we need not fear what man can do unto us. (4.) In our preſent ſituation we are liable to many difficulties and diſtreſſes, from which we are not able to guard or extricate ourſelves; but the almighty Creator is infinitely able to deliver his ſervants from any danger, and can clear a paſſage through all embaraſſments. He can make a way even in the ſea, and a path in the mighty waters. (5.) He who from his own inexhauſtible fulneſs hath brought forth all worlds and creatures, is our ſhepherd; he careth for us, and can fully ſupply all our wants. (6.) He can fully accompliſh all the great and glorious things reveled in the goſpel. He can raiſe us from the dead, change our vile bodies, and clothe us with immortal honor and glory. This ſhould not ſeem to us incredible, becauſe he hath already performed things as incredible, and we have conſtantly expoſed to our view effects of his Power no leſs wonderful.

CHAP. V.

Of The CREATION of MAN.

Gen. i. 26, to the End.

NOW we are come to the formation of *Man*. Here, obſerve, the language of the Creator is altered. Inſtead of, *Let there be Men*, God ſaid, (*Ver.* 26.) *Let us make Man*, or, we will make Man, *in our image, after our likeneſs*, Q. D. "Now we have formed and furniſhed the earth, let us make Man, the nobleſt of our works, "to inhabit, cultivate, and enjoy it." The ſuperior excellency of the human nature is ſignified by the diſtinguiſhed manner in which God is repreſented as addreſſing himſelf to the formation of Man.

The plural number is uſed, [*And Gods ſaid, let us make Man.*] but, according to the genius of the Hebrew language, this is only a magnificent way of expreſſing the majeſty of God; and amounts to no more than this, *And God ſaid I will make Man*. So *Gen.* xi. 7. *Go to, let us go down*, i. e. I will

I will go down. Thus God is called *our Makers*, Job xxxv. 10. Pſal. cxlix. 2. *Thy Creators*, Eccl. xii. 1. *Thy makers is thy huſbands*, Iſai. liv. 5. which are all to be underſtood, and are rendered in the ſingular number. "Nouns appellative denoting dominion, according to the He-"brew idiom, are put in the plural inſtead of the ſingular." Should it be ſuppoſed, that the great God here ſpeaks to ſome other being or beings beſides himſelf, it muſt be to ſome ſubordinate beings; for neither this, nor any other paſſage of ſcripture, can juſtly be explained inconſiſtently with the unity, ſimplicity, or ſingleneſs of the divine nature.

Ver. 26. *Let us make Man in our own Image*, [*Heb.* in the ſketch or ſhadow of us] *after, or like, our Likeneſs.* Theſe words, with reſpect to God, are diminutive, and denote, that the moſt perfect endowments of the human nature are but a ſketch, a ſhadow, or ſomething reſembling the Likeneſs of God. And yet, with reſpect to other creatures on earth, it ſpeaks high diſtinction, and ſuperiority. For this ſketch of the Image of God in Man muſt include, 1. The noble faculties of his mind; underſtanding and will, or freedom of choice, for the government of all his actions and paſſions, and his continual improvement in wiſdom, purity, and happineſs. 2. His dominion over the inferior creatures, expreſsly mentioned, *ver.* 26, 28. By which he is God's Repreſentative, or Viceroy upon earth.

But divines have underſtood this Image of God, as conſiſting in righteouſneſs and true holineſs; which they affirm, were *created with Adam.* Meaning, not that *Adam* was created with ſuch powers, as rendered him capable of acquiring righteouſneſs and holineſs, but that he was *made* in this Image of God; it was *concreated* with him, or *wrought into his nature*, at the ſame time that it was created; and ſo belonged to it as a natural faculty or inſtinct. This they call *original righteouſneſs*, which they ground principally upon the two following paſſages. *Col.* iii. 9, 10. *Lye not one to another, ſeeing that you have* [by your Chriſtian profeſſion] *put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the Image of him that created him.* Epheſ. iv. 22, 23, 24. *That ye put off concerning the former converſation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful luſts: and be renewed in the ſpirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs, and true holineſs.* All this is ſuppoſed to relate to *Adam*'s being originally created in the Image of God.

The *old man*, ſay they, is a corrupt nature derived from *Adam*; and the *new man*, is fallen man reſtored to the primitive temper, or to that righteouſneſs and holineſs, in which they ſuppoſe *Adam* was created. But this is wide of the Apoſtle's ſenſe. It is not uncommon with him to compare the Chriſtian church to a man, or the human body, of which *Chriſt* is the head, and we are all of us members in particular. The *new man* was created, when God erected the Goſpel Diſpenſation, and *broke down the middle Wall of Partition between us* Jews and Gentiles, (*Epheſ.* ii. 13, 14, 15, 16.) *for to make to himſelf*, in the Goſpel, *of twain*, or of the two parties, believing Jews and Gentiles, *one new man*, or the new conſtitution and community, under the Goſpel. To this *new man*, the *old man* is directly oppoſed; and therefore muſt ſignify the Gentile ſtate or community, headed by *Satan*, to which, before their converſion,

verſion, they were joined. This is confirmed by the Apoſtle, *Epheſ.* ii. 11. *Wherefore remember, that ye being in time paſſed* Gentiles *in the fleſh*, &c. And chap. iv. 17, &c. *This I ſay — that ye walk not as other* Gentiles *walk*, &c. They formerly belonged to the *old man*, the body of impure, idolatrous heathen; but now they had, by their Chriſtian profeſſion, *put off* this *old man*, together *with* all *his* wicked *deeds*, Col. iii. 9, 10, and *had put on the new man*, or were joined to the Chriſtian church, or community. And therefore, they were obliged to be *renewed in the ſpirit of their minds*, and to live in *knowledge*, [true wiſdom] or *in righteouſneſs and true holineſs*. For God created the *new man*, or conſtituted the Chriſtian church, in wiſdom and righteouſneſs and holineſs, after his own Image, or the rectitude of his nature, with this deſign, to promote the ſame rectitude among men. For (*Epheſ.* ii. 10.) *we*, the new Man, or the whole body of Chriſtians, *are God's workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which God ordained*, when he formed the Goſpel Scheme, *that we ſhould walk in them*.

But what hath this to do with *Adam*'s being created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs? Which, in the nature of things, could not be created, or wrought into his nature at the ſame time he was made; becauſe ſuch a righteouſneſs would have been produced in him without his knowledge and conſent; and ſo would have been no righteouſneſs at all. For whatever is wrought in my nature without my knowledge and choice, cannot poſſibly be either ſin or virtue in me, becauſe it is no act of mine; but muſt be a meer natural inſtinct, like the induſtry of the bee, or the fierceneſs of the lion. Righteouſneſs is right action, directed by knowledge and judgment; but *Adam* could neither act, nor know, nor judge, before he, and all his intellectual powers were created; and therefore he muſt exiſt and uſe his intellectual powers, before he could be righteous and holy.

We may further obſerve — That God made the firſt pair male and female, that they might multiply and inhabit the whole earth, and ſupply a perpetual ſucceſſion of men and women, pronouncing a bleſſing upon the regular propagation of the human ſpecies, *ver.* 28. *And God bleſſed them*, &c. But this bleſſing, divines have ſuppoſed, was turned into a curſe, by *Adam*'s tranſgreſſion; which ſo corrupted the human nature, that thereby and thenceforth we all come into the world under the wrath and curſe of God. But that this alſo is a miſtake, is moſt evident from *Gen.* ix. 1. where God repetes, and pronounces the very ſame original bleſſing upon the increaſe or birth of mankind 1600 years, and upwards, after *Adam*'s tranſgreſſion, when the world was to be reſtored, and repleniſhed from *Noah and his ſons*. This proves, that mankind, in all ſucceſſive generations, have come, and will come into the world, under the very ſame bleſſing and favor of God, which was declared at the firſt creation of Man. It is of great importance to obſerve theſe remarks, not to produce any diſguſt or animoſity towards thoſe that eſpouſe the contrary opinion, who ought to be treated with candor and forbearance, but to ſettle our own judgments upon right principles.

Once more; the original grant of ſuſtenance to Man was confined to herbs, and the fruits of plants and trees, *ver.* 29, 30. which afterwards was enlarged, and included animal food, *Gen.* ix. 3.

Now

Now let us take a ſurvey of the nature which God has graciouſly beſtowed upon us. The body conſiſts of a mean material, *the duſt of the ground*; but the mind is of nobler extraction, for (chap. ii. 7.) *God breathed into his noſtrils the breath of life, and Man became a living ſoul.* Job xxxii. 8. *The inſpiration of the Almighty giveth us underſtanding*; the nobleſt gift of our Maker. The force and excellence of which appears in a ſurpriſing variety of inventions and diſcoveries. It is this faculty which penetrates into the moſt ſecret receſſes of Nature; judges of, and admires the beauty and contrivance of the vaſt fabric of the univerſe; and traceth the footſteps of the moſt aſtoniſhing wiſdom and regularity in the various ſituations and motions of the heavenly bodies. By this we review generations and actions, characters and events, that exiſted long before we were born; and dart our reflections the other way, into futurity, even as far as to the final period of this world, with all its works. By this we conceive, though but negatively, Eternity itſelf; and apprehend the ſtate and felicity of beings far ſuperior to ourſelves. By this we ſtretch our thoughts to the higheſt excellency, and contemplate the nature of the infinitely perfect Being.

Our ſingular honor and advantage lies in our moral capacities. While inſtinct determines the purſuits of inferior creatures; whilſt they are utterly unable to judge of cauſes and effects, to draw conſequences, or to reaſon about the natures and tendencies of things, in order to avoid or embrace, and are rather acted upon, than act, we deliberate, we chooſe our way, we feel and examine what is before us; this is good, and therefore to be choſen; this is evil, therefore to be avoided; this will improve and exalt our life, this leads to diſhonour and miſery. We can ſtudy and obſerve the precepts of Divine Wiſdom; imitate the moral perfections of Deity; converſe with the ſupreme Father, and deſire, and diſpoſe ourſelves for, the everlaſting enjoyment of his favor. And agreeably to theſe diſtinguiſhing honors of our nature, God our Maker, whoſe delights are with the children of men, has expreſſed his high regards to us, by ſupplying us with all proper materials for the improvement of our underſtandings; not only the objects of nature, but alſo the writings of good and wiſe men, eſpecially the holy Scriptures, a rich treaſury of the moſt excellent knowledge; containing the moſt ſurprizing diſcoveries, the moſt uſeful inſtructions, the moſt juſt and noble principles and motives; and whatever is proper to cultivate and refine our ſpirits. In particular, the redemption of the world by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. That God ſhould ſend his well-beloved Son out of his boſom to dwell among us in our fleſh, to revele the high deſigns of the Divine Wiſdom and Godneſs, to give himſelf a ſacrifice and offering to God upon the croſs, to make atonement for our ſins, to raiſe us to the dignity of kings and prieſts to his God and Father, that we might reign for ever with him; this exalts the love of God to men infinitely beyond our higheſt thoughts and imaginations; this raiſes our nature to an amazing, to an inexpreſſible dignity and value.

Theſe conſiderations ſhould diſpoſe us to be pleaſed with our being, and thankful to our Maker for it. With pleaſure we ſhould reflect that we are *men*. Every perſon, how low ſoever in the world, hath that in poſſeſſion, which is more valuable than thouſands of gold and ſilver; an

immenſe

immenſe treaſure, to which the whole earth bears no proportion, *himſelf*, a reaſonable Soul, an immortal Spirit; to which, in real excellence, the viſible creation, the earth with all its material riches, the ſky with all its ſplendid furniture, is not to be compared. Let us not meaſure ourſelves by worldly riches. The ſoul is the ſtandard of the Man, and raiſes him vaſtly above all that is earthly. How fooliſh then, how ſhameful, how impious is it to proſtitute ourſelves to the trifles of the world; to be fond of earthly things, and to make our reaſon a drudge to ſenſual purſuits! God has made us *Men*, creatures of the fineſt powers and faculties; he hath uſed us as Men, by making the moſt ample proviſion to enable us to honor his Grace and our own being. And ſhall we deſert our Manhood? Shall we deſpiſe the rich bounty of Heaven? Shall we mingle with the duſt that particle of ſuperior life, which God hath breathed into us? Rather let us aſſert the dignity of our being, and make it our principal care to improve it by all the advantages God hath provided. The knowledge of God; conformity of heart and life to his will; the fruits of the ſpirit, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, fidelity, meekneſs, temperance; converſe with God; the high privileges of the ſons of God; the proſpects of eternal glory; theſe are the objects of our care: as we are enlightened by the Goſpel, we are obliged to make theſe our ſtudy, and to form our ſpirits according to the ſublime and excellent ſentiments which theſe inſpire, that thus we may be fiting ourſelves for a much higher and more perfect degree of exiſtence in a better world.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Institution *of the* Sabbath.

Gen. II. Ver. 1, 2, 3.

AS ſoon as God had created the world, and man in it, he *bleſſed the Seventh Day*, upon which he reſted from creation, and *ſanctified it*, i. e. he diſtinguiſhed it from the other ſix days by ſeting it apart to the purpoſes of religion. Thus the ſanctification of the Sabbath is the firſt and oldeſt of God's inſtitutions, and muſt have a real foundation in the nature of Man, and an immediate connexion with our being, and the great and excellent ends of it. The Sabbath and Man were, in a manner, created together. This is an indication, that although the particular time is, as it muſt neceſſarily be, of poſitive appointment, yet the thing itſelf is an article of natural religion, and ſtands upon the reaſon of things. The great end for which we are brought into life, is to attain the knowledge, and to be confirmed in the love and obedience of God; which includes all right action and virtue, all that is perfective of our nature, all that renders us happy in our ſelves, and a

bleſſing

bleſſing to others; and all that can qualify us for the enjoyment of God, and fit us for immortal honour and glory. We cannot keep a due and prevailing ſenſe of theſe things upon our minds, without cloſe and repeated application of thought; and therefore, as the affairs and neceſſities of this preſent life make ſuch conſtant and importunate demands upon us, that our hearts and thoughts would be unavoidably ingroſſed by them, it is in the nature of things neceſſary, that ſome certain time ſhould be publicly appropriated to the exerciſes of religion, inſtruction, prayer and praiſe, to fortify our minds againſt temptations, and to ſeaſon them with piety and virtue. And doubtleſs, God alone hath wiſdom and authority ſufficient to aſſign that portion of time which is proper and generally competent for thoſe good pupoſes.

The Sabbath is perfectly ſuited to our nature and circumſtances, and therefore was very properly inſtituted at the creation. But ſome of the learned pretend, that *Moſes* here ſpeaks, by anticipation, of the Inſtitution of the Sabbath a long time after this, when he was lawgiver in *Iſrael*. This is a fiction without any foundation in the text. The hiſtorian expreſsly relates, that God bleſſed and ſanctified that day on which he reſted, or ceaſed, from creation; which, in all fair conſtruction, muſt be underſtood of his ſanctifying it, at the time when he reſted from creation. That we find no other mention of the Sabbath in the ſummary and very comprehenſive hiſtory of *Geneſis*, is no proof that the Patriarchs did not obſerve it; much leſs that the law thereof was not all that time in force. We find not the leaſt mention, or intimation, of the Sabbath in all the book of *Joſhua*, nor in *Judges*, *Ruth*, I *Samuel*, II *Samuel*, I *Kings*, till we come to II *Kings*, iv. 23. a far more particular hiſtorie than the book of *Geneſis*; and yet it is very certain that the law of the Sabbath was all that time in force, and without doubt was obſerved too. There are very clear intimations of regard to the Sabbath in the book of *Geneſis*, chap. viii. 8—13. Thrice *Noah* ſent the dove out of the ark, after he had every time waited ſeven days. *Jacob* (Gen. xxix. 27, 28.) fulfilled *Leah*'s week. This plainly ſhews the Patriarchs, long before *Moſes* was born, reckoned time by *ſeven days*, or *weeks*; which can be referred to no other ſuppoſeable original but the inſtitution of the Sabbath, at the creation.

The *Iſraelites* indeed, during their long continuance and ſervitude in *Egypt*, upwards of 200 years, ſeem to have loſt their reckoning of the Sabbath, when they were conſtrained by perpetual and moſt ſervile labor to neglect the obſervance of it. However, it certainly was the appointment of God, that they ſhould begin a new reckoning of the ſeventh day, and form a new epocha, namely, the falling of the *manna*. Exod. xvi. 5. *And it ſhall come to paſs on the ſixth day, they ſhall prepare that* manna *which they bring in; and it ſhall be twice as much as they gather daily.* And when the people had done ſo, *the rulers of the congregation came, and told Moſes*; probably inquiring into the reaſon, why God had given ſuch an order, *ver.* 23. *And Moſes ſaid unto them, this is that which the Lord hath ſaid*, or, this is the meaning of the Divine Command, *To-morrow is the reſt of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord.* Ver. 25, 26. *Ye ſhall not then find it in the field; ſix days ſhall ye gather it, but on the ſeventh day, which is the Sabbath, there ſhall be none.* And this courſe continued for

for forty years till they came into the land of *Canaan*. Now this was deviſed in much wiſdom to ſettle and determine the day, which, otherwiſe, having loſt their reckoning, during their long ſervitude in *Egypt*, they poſſibly would not eaſily have been brought to agree upon. For thus, for forty years together, they would be under a neceſſity of diſtinguiſhing the Sabbath, and of reſting upon it; having little elſe to do the greateſt part of the time, but to gather and dreſs *manna*; and no *manna* falling upon that day, they muſt of courſe be aſſured of the day, and obliged to reſt upon it, Note — the reſtoring and aſcertaining the Sabbath, was the firſt point of religion, that was ſettled, after the children of *Iſrael* came out of *Egypt*, as being of the greateſt moment; and this, in relation to the original inſtitution, for the law at mount *Sinai* was not then given.

Afterwards the ordinance of the Sabbath was inſerted into the body of the moral law, under a particular emphaſis, *Remember the Sabbath-Day to keep it holy*. And the *Jew* is reminded of the antiquity of this inſtitution, in the reaſon annexed to this commandment, *For in ſix days the Lord made heaven and earth*, &c. And being thus ranked among the other great articles of our duty, which are of moral obligation, and are always refered and appealed to, by our Lord and his Apoſtles, as binding to us Chriſtians, it muſt ſtand upon the ſame ground, and lay the ſame obligations upon our conſciences. For the ſame truth and authority, which enacted the reſt, enacted this precept alſo. He that ſaid, *Thou ſhalt have no other gods before me—thou ſhalt not bow down to any graven image—thou ſhalt not take the name of God in vain—honor thy father—thou ſhalt do no murder*—&c. ſaid alſo, *Remember the Sabbath-Day to keep it holy*.

The Jewiſh feſtivals, new-moons and ſabbaths, as they were ſhadows and figures of good things to come under the Goſpel, our Lord did aboliſh. When the ſubſtance was come, the ſhadow vaniſhed. And it is of ſabbaths in this ſenſe the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Col.* ii. 16. *Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in reſpect of a holy-day, or of the new-moon, or of the ſabbath days*. But the ſeventh day Sabbath was no part of the Levitical law, it exiſted long before that, and therefore was not aboliſhed with it. On the contrary, our Lord claims dominion over the Sabbath. *Luke* vi. 5. *He ſaid unto the Phariſees, that the Son of Man is Lord alſo of the Sabbath*. Therefore the Sabbath muſt be an ordinance belonging to our Lord's kingdom, otherwiſe he could not be Lord of it. He never pretended to be Lord of circumciſion, or of ſacrifices; theſe belonged to a diſpenſation of which he was not Lord. But he is Lord of the Chriſtian Diſpenſation, and its ordinances, and among the reſt of the Sabbath. In conſequence of which Lordſhip,

I. He rectified the ſuperſtitious abuſe of the Sabbath, and reduced it to the original ſtandard. He reformed the traditionary corruptions of ſeveral of the commandments of moral and eternal obligation *. But of all others, moſt ſignally, remarkably, and conſtantly, by words and by deeds, at the hazard of his life, he reformed the abuſe of the fourth commandment

* Mat. v. 21, 27, 33. xv. 4, &c.

commandment †; which he never would have done, had the Sabbath been an ordinance, that was to die in a little time with the Jewiſh diſpenſation. On the contrary, this demonſtrates, that he regarded the juſt ſanctification of the Sabbath as of perpetual obligation, and as of very great importance in religion.

II. He removed the Sabbath from the ſeventh to the firſt day of the week. For we find in the Apoſtolic Hiſtory that the Diſciples met together on that day, (called the Lord's Day, *Rev.* i. 10.) to break bread, or to celebrate the Lord's Supper, which is the proper and peculiar worſhip of Chriſtians, *Acts* xx. 7. Now this could not be done without the expreſs injunction of the Apoſtles; nor could the Apoſtles do this without a commiſſion from Chriſt. And as our Lord roſe from the dead on the firſt day, we ſuppoſe the Chriſtian Sabbath hath relation to his Reſurrection; and ſo the Lord's Day hath been kept holy by the univerſal Church from the Apoſtles days to this time.

Thus there have been three *epochas*, or dates, from which the Sabbath has been counted, namely, (1.) From the firſt day of the creation. (2.) From the firſt day of the falling of the *manna*. (3.) From the firſt day of the Goſpel Diſpenſation. But ſtill it is the ſeventh day makes the Sabbath, which God bleſſed; and the ſeventh, which we now obſerve, is as much, and as truly the Sabbath, which God ſanctifyed, as ever it was from the begining of the world.

The primary notion of the Sabbath, is a reſt or ceſſation from the ordinary buſineſs of life. The deſign of it is to preſerve true religion; which would never have been loſt in the world, had the Sabbath been duly obſerved from the firſt inſtitution of it. And therefore we find in Scripture, both under the old and new diſpenſations, it was applyed to the purpoſes of religion. It is repreſented as a holy convocation, on which the *Iſraelites* were to aſſemble for divine worſhip, *Lev.* xxiii. 3. *David* wrote the 92d pſalm for the Sabbath Day, and therein gives us juſt ideas of the work of it. On this day the *Jews* met together in their ſynagogues for religious exerciſes; and there our Lord honored and ſanctified the Sabbath by his preſence and inſtructions. *Mark* i. 21, 22. vi. 2. *Luke* iv. 16, 31. xiii. 10. And all Chriſtians, in all times and places, have aſſembled on the Sabbath to hear the word of God, to offer up prayer and thankſgiving, and to celebrate the Lord's Supper, in order to employ their thoughts in pious meditations, and furniſh their minds with the beſt principles and diſpoſitions. A work exceeding pleaſant and profitable, which demands and deſerves the whole of our thought and attention. Therefore, for this good purpoſe, we are to reſt from ordinary buſineſs, and to avoid whatever may diſſipate our thoughts, or indiſpoſe our hearts for the heavenly work of the day.

Our Lord hath taught us ſo to underſtand this, as not to mix any thing ſuperſtitious with the obſervation of the Sabbath, nor to conceive of it as ſuch a ſcrupulous reſt, that we may not do any thing fit and reaſonable, and which otherwiſe is a duty; works of neceſſity and mercy he expreſly allows. Whatever cannot be defered to another day, without loſs

† See Mat. xii. 1—12. Luke vi. 10, 11, xiii. 11—17. xiv. 1—7. John v. 9—19. vii. 19—23. ix. 14, 15, 16.

loſs or damage, may be taken care of on the Sabbath. And in general he hath pronounced, *That the Sabbath* (alluding probably to the firſt inſtitution of it) *was made for man*, to be ſubſervient to his virtue and happineſs; *not man for the Sabbath.* Man was made for duties of moral and eternal obligation, and is bound to obſerve them in whatever extremity or neceſſity he may be; but man is not made for the rigorous obſervation of the ſabbatical reſt, or any other poſitive inſtitution, ſo as thereby to embaraſs or diſtreſs his life, or to neglect any opportunity of doing good.

I conclude with a few reflections upon *Iſai.* lviii. 13, 14. Having, in the name of God, recommended goodneſs, charity, and compaſſion, in the preceding verſes, and pronounced a ſingular bleſſing upon thoſe who exerciſe them, the Prophet adds, by the ſame authority, *If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleaſure on my holy day.* q. d. "If you conſcientiouſly ſuſpend the ordinary buſineſs of life, and forbear "to pleaſe and gratify your own inclinations, that with a free and com- "poſed mind you may attend upon the ſervices of religion, for which I "have ſanctified the Sabbath; *and* [if thou] *call the Sabbath a delight, the "holy of the Lord, honorable, and ſhalt honor him*; if you have ſuch a ſenſe "of the excellency and benefit of the Sabbath, that you take delight "therein, accounting it a pleaſure and happineſs, as being conſecrated "to the worſhip of the moſt high God, and therefore honorable and glo- "rious in itſelf; and honorable alſo to you, as it is a mark of the dig- "nity of your nature, a token of your intereſt in the divine favor, "(*Exod.* xxxi. 13. *Ezek.* xx. 12.) and of your being admitted to com- "munion with him; if in this perſuaſion you ſhall ſincerely endeavor "to honor God by employing the day in the offices of devotion, *not "doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleaſure, nor ſpeaking thine "own words*; not doing the ordinary works of your calling, nor ſpend- "ing the time in amuſements or diverſions, or in impertinent converſa- "ſation; *then ſhalt thou delight thyſelf in the Lord*; then thou ſhalt become "ſuch a proficient in piety, and gain ſuch a ſenſe of God and religion, "as will eſtabliſh in your heart a fund of holy pleaſure, comfort, joy, "and good hope towards God." The Prophet, in this chapter, is inculcating real, vital, acceptable religion, goodneſs and compaſſion to our fellow-creatures, and piety towards God in keeping the Sabbath; promiſing the like bleſſings to both thoſe branches of true religion, namely, the favor of God and the conſtant care of his Providence. We may therefore take this from the Spirit of God, as a juſt deſcription of the right manner of ſanctifying the Sabbath, and aſſure ourſelves, that he who bleſſed the Day, will bleſs us in keeping it holy.

CHAP. VII.

CHAP. VII.

Of a STATE *of* TRIAL.

Gen. ii. 8—18.

CONCERNING the ſituation and rivers of the country of *Eden*, as here deſcribed by *Moſes*, Bp. PATRICK, in his Commentary upon this place, gives an account, which ſeems to be not altogether improbable. The Garden lay in the country of *Eden*; *out of*, or through, which country *a river went* unto the Garden *to water it*, (*ver.* 11.) *and from thence*, from the country of *Eden*, *it parted*, or was divided, *and became into four heads*; namely, two above, before it entered *Eden*, called *Euphrates* and *Hiddekel*, or *Tigris*; and two below, after it had paſſed through *Eden*, called *Piſon* and *Gihon*, *which compaſſeth*, or runneth along by, *the whole land of Cuſh*. ver. 13.

In the eaſtern part of *Eden* the Lord God planted a Garden furniſhed with all pleaſant and uſeful fruits. And there he placed *Adam* to dreſs and keep it; for man was made for buſineſs, *ver.* 8, 15. Two trees in this Garden were remarkably diſtinguiſhed from the reſt, perhaps in appearance and ſituation, as well as in uſe, namely, the *Tree of Life*, *and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*. Theſe, I conceive, were appointed for inſtruction and religious meditation; to preſerve in *Adam*'s mind a ſenſe of the conſequences of virtue and vice, or of obedience and diſobedience. In this view, while he continued obedient, he was allowed to eat of the Tree of Life, as a pledge and aſſurance on the part of God, that he ſhould live for ever, or be immortal; after his tranſgreſſion he was denied acceſs to it, *chap.* iii. 24. For the ſame purpoſe, as a pledge of immortality reſtored in Chriſt, it is uſed, *Rev.* ii. 7. xxii. 2. On the contrary, the other Tree was deſigned to give him the knowledge, the ſenſe or apprehenſion of good and evil, or of good connected with evil, *i. e.* of pernicious enjoyment, deſtructive gratification, vicious pleaſure, or ſuch as cannot be enjoyed without tranſgreſſing the law of God. *Good and Evil*, I apprehend, is an *hendiadys*, like that *Gen.* xix. 24. *brimſtone and fire*, i. e. fired of burning brimſtone. 1 *Chron.* xxii. 5. *the houſe muſt be — of fame and glory*, i. e. of glorious fame. *Pateris libamus et auro*, i. e. aureis pateris. טוֹב may ſignify pleaſure or profit. [See the explication of it in the Heb. Engl. Concordance.] Thus *Good and Evil* may denote pernicious pleaſure or profit. Of the fruit of this Tree, though it appeared pleaſant and inviting, *Adam* was forbidden to eat upon pain of death. This was to make him underſtand, that unlawful enjoyment of any kind would be his deſtruction.

Theſe two Trees may be conſidered as *Adam*'s books. He was in a kind of infantile ſtate, void of all learning, without any theorems, or general principles to govern himſelf by. God was therefore pleaſed, in this ſenſible manner, to impreſs upon his mind juſt conceptions of the very different conſequences of obedience and diſobedience. And it will

be of great uſe even to us, at this day, to look into, and to meditate upon theſe two books of our firſt father.

What requires our particular attention is this, that *Adam*'s obedience is put upon Trial by the prohibition, *ver.* 17. *But of the Tree of Knowledge, of Good and Evil, thou ſhalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die.* *Adam* had not gained the habits of obedience and holineſs, but was put under this inſtance of diſcipline in order to his acquiring of them. As ſoon as God had made Man a moral agent, he put him upon Trial. And it is univerſally allowed, that all mankind are in the ſame ſtate, in a State of Trial. It muſt therefore be of importance to have right notions of ſuch a State.

In order to this, let it be well conſidered,

I. *That God hath erected a kingdom for his honor, and the felicity of his rational creatures.* This kingdom, our Lord informs us, was *prepared from the foundation of the world.* Mat. xxv. 34. There we men ſhall be *equal to the angels,* Luke xx. 36; and probably, like them, ſhall be placed in poſts of honor and power, in ſome part of the univerſe; as is plainly intimated *Mat.* xxiv. 45—47. xxv. 21. *Luke* xix. 17. 1 *Cor.* vi. 2, 3. *Rev.* ii. 10. iii. 21.

II. *Without holineſs, or an habitual ſubjection of the Will to Reaſon, or to the Will of God, none can be fit to be members of this kingdom.* Wickedneſs, in its very nature, ſtands directly oppoſed to the peace and well-being of the univerſe; for it is error in the mind, rebellion againſt God, and miſchief to all within its influence. And the moſt benevolent of all Beings will not take error, rebellion, and miſchief into his kingdom, erected for the purpoſes of goodneſs and enjoyment. *Rev.* xxi. 27. *And there ſhall in no wiſe enter into it,* the holy City, new Jeruſalem, (ver. 2.) *any thing that defileth,* any impure, vicious perſons; *neither whatſoever worketh abomination, or* maketh *a lie*; all idolaters, all that practiſe iniquity and deceit, are excluded out of it. *But they ſhall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it*; the excellent of the earth, who have purged themſelves from all ungodlineſs and ſin, and ſo *are Veſſels unto honor, ſanctified and fit for the Maſter's uſe, and prepared unto every good work.* Nothing but ſubjection to the Will of God, in all duty and obedience, can qualify us for the honors, felicity, and employments of the kingdom of heaven. Therefore,

III. *No moral Agents, merely on account of their* natural *powers, how excellent ſoever, are worthy to be admitted into the kingdom of God.* Natural powers, in angels as well as worms, are the workmanſhip and gift of God alone; and therefore, not being the virtue, nor the effect of the virtue of the beings that are poſſeſſed of them, can be no recommendation to the continued favor and eſteem of God. In order to that, the natural powers of moral Agents muſt, not only be capable of right action, but alſo actually exerted in acting rightly. Otherwiſe, their powers, though of the nobleſt kind, are uſeleſs and inſignificant. It is one thing to be born, or produced into the *kingdom of nature,* and another to be born to the habits of virtue, whereby we are rendered fit to be admited into the *kingdom of heaven.* The former depends entirely upon God's ſovereign pleaſure, in giving life and powers, in any kind or degree, as he chooſeth; the other depends upon a right uſe and application of the

powers

powers God hath beſtowed; and is the privilege only of thoſe wiſe and happy ſpirits, who attain to a habit of true holineſs. And thus, our Lord's rule, *Joh.* iii. 3. *Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee*, or enjoy, *the kingdom of God*, may extend to all created minds, whatſoever, under their ſeveral peculiar circumſtances.

IV. *Holineſs, or virtue, cannot be forced upon us whether we will or not.* The violence, which overpowers and compels the Will, deſtroys the Will or Choice, and conſequently deſtroys Virtue; which is no otherwiſe Virtue, than as it is freely choſen. That Being which cannot be vicious, cannot be virtuous. If he is not free to chooſe evil, he is not free to chooſe good; for a power of being virtuous neceſſarily implies a power of being the contrary. The only means, therefore, that can be uſed to induce a moral Agent to Virtue, are inſtruction, admonition, perſuaſion, the impreſſion of objects or circumſtances upon the mind, the ſuggeſtions of the Spirit of God, and ſuch like methods as engage attention, and influence inclination and choice, without deſtroying Freedom. And a *habit* of Virtue, which alone recommends us to God, can be gained and aſcertained no otherwiſe than by repeated Acts, by uſe and exerciſe, by being put to the proof under proper Trials, by reſiſting ſolicitations, ſurmounting difficulties, and bearing ſufferings. This is the moſt natural way of bringing Virtue, or Holineſs, to it's maturity and ſtability. Therefore,

V. *It ſeems agreeable to the reaſon of things, that all rational creatures whatſoever ſhould, for ſome time, be in a State of Trial.* However, this is, or hath been, the caſe of all we are acquainted with. The Angels have paſſed through a probation, doubtleſs adapted to their different circumſtances; in which ſome of them *abode not in the truth*; *they ſined*; *they kept not their firſt eſtate*, *Joh.* viii. 44. 2 *Pet.* ii. 4. *Jude* 6. And our firſt parents, how ſingular ſoever their condition might be in other reſpects, were put under a particular Trial, by being forbidden to eat of *the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*; which muſt be intended to form their minds to an habitual obedience to the Law, or Will, of God.

VI. *We Men are upon Trial.* This is evident from revelation, where we are repreſented as *Pilgrims and Strangers*, looking for, and traveling to a better country, 1 *Pet.* ii. 11. — As in a *warfare*, where we muſt fight for the victory, as we hope to be crowned, *Epheſ.* vi. 14. — As in a *race*, where we are running for a prize, *Heb.* xii. 1. 1 *Cor.* ix. 24, 25. — As *laborers* in a vineyard, who have work to do in order to receive wages, *Mat.* xx. 1. — As *ſervants* intruſted with their maſter's ſubſtance, for the improvement of which they are accountable to him, *Mat.* xxv. 14. *Luke* xix. 13. And God hath appointed a day, in which he will call us to an account for our preſent behaviour, and render to every man according to what he hath done in the body, whether it be good or evil. This is the ſtrongeſt evidence, that we are now upon Trial. And the ſenſe of revelation is abundantly confirmed by our circumſtances in life.

Our faculties are of the nobleſt kind, and we enjoy all manner of means for the cultivation of them; but not without great care, induſtry, and reſolution. So many are the occaſions of deception, and ſo eaſily are we miſled in our ſearches after the truth, that we cannot attain

to any clear or useful knowledge without a constant and cautious attention. Even Revelation, like the heavens themselves, is interspersed with clouds, things dark and hard to be understood. And when we have found the truth, the profession of it is attended with much inconvenience and trouble from the pride and malice of persecution. All which is wisely appointed. For had all been plain, obvious, and easy, our integrity and sincere attachment to truth could not have been exercised and proved. The passions and appetites of the flesh; the possessions, gains, pleasures, and customs of the world; the calamities of life, diseases, disappointments, losses, dangers, enemies, fears, wants, weakness; all these are great embarassments to virtue and piety, fatigue and solicit our minds from righteousness and purity, and oblige us to constant watchfulness and self-denial, in order to gain and secure the habits of holiness. Every condition, every possession is accompanied with its temptations. Wherever we are, we are in the midst of snares; and whatever we have carries some danger or other in it; insomuch that, without care and attention, we cannot preserve the purity of our minds, which yet, by the nature of things, and the command of God, we are obliged to do. This shews we are upon Trial, or in a state of discipline. For,

VII. *A State of Trial necessarily requires, that different and opposite interests,* (as the flesh and the spirit, the law of God, and the law in our members, the present world, and a future state,) *should so stand in competition for our affections and regards, as to oblige us to be very serious in considering, and thoroughly sincere in chooſing and pursuing what is right and good.* And herein lies our Trial, whether we will follow God, or forsake him, prefer our mortal bodies before our immortal souls, the gratification of our lusts, before the purity and peace of our minds, the things of this transitory world, before the heavenly and eternal inheritance.

VIII. *The end and design of our Trial is to refine and exalt our nature.* James i. 12. *Blessed is the man that* worthily *endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.* Heb. xii. 11. *No chastening for the present is joyous but grievous; nevertheless,* &c. If indeed we are overcome by temptation, and drawn into a contempt of God, truth, and righteousness, we debase and destroy ourselves; we prove ourselves to be unfit for the happy society in heaven, forfeit the favor of God, and shall fall into perdition. But this must be our own fault. The noble intention of our Maker is, that we should overcome temptation, and then we are happy for ever. We have stood the test, we have passed honorably through our Trials, we have approved ourselves to God, as those whom he judges fit for preferment and happiness in his eternal kingdom. And shortly we shall hear, *Well done, good and faithful, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* Hence our Trial is compared to that of silver and gold, *Job* xxiii. 10. *Psal.* lxvi. 10, 11. 1 *Pet.* i. 6, 7.

To explain Scripture language, we must distinguish between temptation of *Trial*, and *Seduction*. Temptation of *Trial*, or probation, God hath wisely ordained for the exercise and proof of our virtue. So he tempted *Abraham*, Gen. xxii. 1. Temptation of *seduction* is when we are drawn into sin, *James* i. 13. *Let no man say, when he is tempted,* seduced into sin by temptation.

From

From the preceding propoſitions we may draw the following concluſions.

COROL. 1. *Trials, of the ſevereſt kind, are no mark of God's diſpleaſure, nor any proof that we are under his wrath and curſe.* *Adam* in his ſtate of innocence was tried. The beſt of God's ſervants have gone through heavy Trials. Our Lord *was tempted in all points as we are, but without ſin*, Heb. iv. 15. *My ſon, deſpiſe not the chaſtening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction. For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the ſon in whom he delighteth*, Prov. iii. 11, 12.

COROL. 2. *The appetites and paſſions implanted in our conſtitution, are not the corruption of our nature, but means of our Trial.* And therefore we ſhall be freed from them, when that is over. 1 *Cor.* vi. 13. *Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats —— but God ſhall deſtroy both it and them ——* xv. 44. *It is ſown an animal body, it is raiſed a ſpiritual body.*

COROL. 3. *Whatever Trials may be the occaſion of ſin, may much more be the occaſion of virtue and holineſs.* Temptation may occaſion ſin, but is not the *cauſe* or reaſon of it. For, ſeeing no temptation can ever make it reaſonable to ſin, every temptation, if the ſiner chooſeth, may be rejected as unreaſonable. On the other hand, temptation is naturally an opportunity of exerting our virtue, and of gaining an honorable and glorious victory. Diſtreſſes and wants may fill our hearts with ſolicitude, and tempt us to murmur againſt God, but they have a tendency, being duly conſidered, to lead us to faith in him, and a humble patient ſubmiſſion to his will, the moſt perfect part of a worthy character. Wealth, honor, and power, may prove incentives to pride, luxury, and oppreſſion; but they may, and ought to be motives to gratitude, and means of greater uſefulneſs. Our appetites and paſſions may ſeduce to intemperance and debauchery; but they may be the occaſion of practiſing the moſt laudable ſelf-government and ſobriety. And ſo of all the reſt. *Rom.* v. 3. *We glory in tribulations; knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope*, that hope which *maketh not aſhamed*, or that ſhall never be diſappointed. *James* i. 2. *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing, that the Trial of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing* to qualify you for the kingdom of heaven.

COROL. 4. *In a State of Trial natural evil hath a tendency to promote moral good.* For under any defects of happineſs, virtue may be exerciſed and increaſe. Hence it follows, (1.) That this life, notwithſtanding the afflictions which attend it, is *a day of ſalvation*, or a proper, and valuable opportunity of attaining eternal life. (2.) That the quantity of virtue in this preſent world is not to be meaſured, by the joy it giveth the poſſeſſor, or the good it doth to others, but by the circumſtances of Trial under which it acteth and ſubſiſteth. For although all holineſs, by the will of God, will ſooner or later be crowned with joy; and always actually brings forth good works, in proportion to the agent's power and opportunities; yet two agents, of equal virtue, may be ſo differently ſituated in the creation, that the virtue of the one ſhall produce a thouſand times leſs comfort to its ſelf, and benefit to others, than the virtue of the other. Or, the ſame virtue which, in this life, brings forth but

one degree of joy and uſefulneſs, in another world, may bring forth a thouſand degrees.

This ſtands upon two principles. 1. That holineſs and happineſs are eſſentially different, and connected only by the will of God. Hence it is, in fact, that many perſons, truly virtuous and pious, have yet no comfort of their virtue. 2. The proper act of a moral agent ſtands in the will and choice alone, not in the external effect produced by it. And therefore the will, or choice, may be compleatly holy, where yet the outward act is hindered by contrary circumſtances. Upon theſe grounds one may venture to affirm, that the virtue of *Lazarus*, which under all his pains and poverty in our earth, brought forth but a ſmall degree of joy and uſefulneſs, might, in *Abraham*'s boſom, be equal to the virtue of an Angel in heaven, which actually brought forth ten thouſand degrees. For as a cubical foot of our groſſer air might poſſibly expand, and fill a cubical furlong in the higher and thiner region of pure *Ether*; ſo that virtue, which can ſubſiſt under the loads and clogs of our temptations and difficulties, though its preſent fruits are but ſmall, may dilate and blaze out into a glory, magnificence, and ſplendor, equal to that of the holieſt Angels. This the Apoſtle *Peter* intimates, 1 *Pet.* i. 7. The *tried faith* of perſecuted Saints will *be found unto praiſe, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt.*

Corol. 5. *This world is not a State of enjoyment.* He that made it, and Man in it, made it for Trial. We muſt not therefore dream of a continued courſe of eaſe, peace, and proſperity, but muſt expect to meet with Trials.

Corol. 6. *It is no matter in what temporal circumſtances we are, if we do but acquit ourſelves well and faithfully in the ſight of God.* *Job*, under all his calamities, was not a worſe man, or leſs the care and delight of heaven. He was then like gold in the furnace, under the diſcipline of Divine Wiſdom and Love, in order to his being purified into a condition more illuſtrious and excellent. You are in plenty and proſperity. What then? This is but an inſtance of your Trial, and your real happineſs muſt be meaſured by the effects they have upon your mind. If proſperity diſpoſes to thankfulneſs and good works, it is happy; but if it ſeduceth you to forget God, and to indulge irregular appetites, it is hurtful and pernicious. On the other hand, you are in affliction, want, trouble, pain. What then? This is not your fixed condition; it is only one inſtance of a temporary Trial, which ſhortly will be at an end. And if your afflictions work in you greater contempt of the world, ſelf-denial, faith, ſubmiſſion, heavenly-mindedneſs, *&c.* your condition is happy, and your afflictions are really better for you than any other State you may fondly wiſh for. But obſerve, this is to be underſtood of afflictions brought upon us by Providence; and will not juſtify us in bringing them upon ourſelves by any faulty criminal conduct. It is nevertheleſs our duty, by all lawful means, to procure the conveniences and comforts of life.

CHAP. VIII.

Further Reflections on a STATE *of* TRIAL.

IT is of the laſt importance to have right notions of life, as a State of Trial. For thus the whole ſcene, otherwiſe confuſed and unaccountable, will appear in a juſt and rational light. Thus we ſhall be convinced, that our being is given us upon the moſt reaſonable and advantageous terms, for the higheſt and moſt excellent ends; and ſhall clearly underſtand what we have to do for the improvement and exaltation of it, free from the vain imaginations and purſuits, hopes and fears, joys and anxieties, which diſtract the minds of the unthinking and ignorant. What I have further to advance upon this point, is comprized in the following propoſitions.

I. *It is a matter of great difficulty to adjuſt our Trials and ſuccors, ſo as not to overpower our faculties by either, but leave us in the free uſe of them.*

II. *God alone hath wiſdom ſufficient to appoint and adjuſt our Trials.* Becauſe he alone underſtands perfectly how to adapt them to the nature of our minds, and to the deſigns of his goodneſs. Whereas we know but little of the nature of our ſpirits, and therefore are not able to proportion temptations to our powers, nor helps and aſſiſtances to our temptations. We are not acquainted with the work we have to do in the future world, nor the ſeveral ſorts of beings, with whom we may hereafter be concerned, in the way of fellowſhip or enmity; and therefore are by no means capable of judging, what ſort or degree of Trials are proper to give us ſuitable qualifications. For this reaſon, it is plainly our duty and wiſdom, humbly and patiently to ſubmit to the Trials God is pleaſed to allot, and to behave well and faithfully under them; without cenſuring, or quarelling with his diſpoſals, which is fooliſh and impious. But though our underſtandings in this caſe are very defective, yet I conceive there are ſome general principles of which we may be, in a good meaſure, certain. As,

III. *The bias of Evil in our Trials ought to be ſtrong in proportion to the degree of virtue required of us.* For the degree of virtue is to be meaſured by the degree of temptation which it reſiſts. That virtue is but in a low degree, which can overcome but a ſmall temptation. That virtue is in a higher, which can overcome a ſtronger temptation. And that virtue is in the higheſt degree, which is ſuperior to all temptation.

IV. *The degree of Virtue, God expects from us, is to be proportioned to the eminent ſtations to which we are to be exalted in his kingdom.* Or, we ſhall be exalted in proportion to the Virtue we have attained. *Mat.* xix. 28. *Luke* xix. 16, 17, 18, 19.

V. *Our Trial ſeems to be appointed for a State of Confirmation* —— and therefore the virtue we are to attain muſt be ſuch as will ſecure our perſeverance in it; which confirmation and perſeverance muſt ſtand, not

upon our being forcibly conſtrained to be virtuous, which is a contradiction, but upon the habits we have attained, or the ſetled good diſpoſitions of our minds. And it ſeems to be the great end of our Trial in this world, that we may attain to ſuch a degree of ſanctity, experienced in a variety of Trials, as in God's wiſdom appears to be of that genuine ſort, which ſhall eventually perſevere, and abide to all eternity. Of which matter our Lord ſpeaketh in this wiſe, *Luke* xvi. 10, 11, 12. *He that is faithful in that which is leaſt, is faithful alſo in much; and he that is unjuſt in the leaſt, is unjuſt alſo in much. If ye therefore have been unfaithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your truſt the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's*, i. e. that which may at any uncertain time be taken from you, and therefore, for the ſake of which it is not worth your while to do a wrong or wicked thing, *who ſhall give you that which is your own*?* what you are to poſſeſs for ever, or which you are never to be deprived of. This plainly ſhews, that we are qualified for honors and truſts in heaven, no otherwiſe than by our preſent faithfulneſs, or the real good qualities of our minds; and that we are now tried in a little, that we may be faithful in much.

VI. *The Judge of all the Earth hath certainly ballanced our Trials with the greateſt exactneſs and equity, that temptation may not be too violent for our weakneſs, and yet ſtrong enough to put our virtue to its proper proof.* Fleſhly luſts war againſt the ſoul, but are conquered effectually by temperance, or keeping our bodies in ſubjection. The world allures our minds, but the world of glory is open to full view, to draw our regards thither. If the devil and his angels are permitted to practiſe his malice in perverting mankind, God hath ſent forth a holy and powerful Spirit to illuminate, ſanctify, ſtrengthen, and comfort; and hath ordered his Angels, in great numbers, to be miniſtering Spirits to the Heirs of Salvation. We may aſſure ourſelves, that we are upon a fair, and even favorable, Trial; for, if we do not neglect our advantages, the means of ſecuring our virtue, if we chuſe to be virtuous, do far ſurpaſs the occaſion of vice and ſin; and in all our conflicts more are with us, than are againſt us; God is with us.

VII. *Our Condition is well adapted to the purpoſes of moral Improvement.* If we conſider life as a State of Enjoyment, all is in confuſion and diſorder, and we are eaſily miſled into the moſt foul and fatal errors; but if we take life as a Trial, for the exerciſe of our virtue, in order to our future advancement, then every part of it will appear to be properly appointed. We have every day opportunities of ſhewing our ſincere regards to *God*, by giving him the preference to the many appetites and objects which court our affections, and come in competition with him. We

* ——— Nimium vobis Romana propago
Viſa potens; ſuperi, propria [*perpetua*] hæc ſi dona fuiſſent.
Æneid. vi. lin. 870.

Nihilne eſſe proprium [*perpetuum*] cuiquam?
——— *Ter. Andr.* Act. iv. Scen. 3. lin. 1.

Omne quod habemus, aut mutuum eſt, aut proprium.
Donat. in locum.

We have opportunities enough to learn what is ſufficient for us to know. And the obſcurities and difficulties in the way of *truth*, are not deſigned to debar us from it, but to exerciſe our integrity in our ſearches after it, and profeſſion of it. All the calamities of life, pains of body, infirmities, ſeducements, loſſes, *&c.* are occaſions of *purifying our hearts*, by ſobriety, humility, repentance, ſelf-denial, patience, *&c.* And for *ſocial virtues*, we cannot ſuppoſe ourſelves in any ſituation, where we ſhould have more occaſions, or more preſſing motives to exerciſe every ſpecies of benevolence towards our fellow-creatures. And if our love to men muſt ſurmount both ſelf-love, that deceitful principle in ourſelves, and ingratitude, that ugly vice in others, hereby we are obliged to exerciſe, in the moſt generous, diſintereſted, and godlike manner, a virtue of the firſt rank, and the moſt neceſſary to preferment in God's creation. For he is the fiteſt for buſineſs and truſt, under the univerſal Father, who moſt of all participates of his kind diſpoſitions and good-will towards the whole univerſe of beings.

VIII. *Different perſons, as they have different capacities, advantages, and opportunities, and are in different circumſtances, conditions, and ſituations, are under different Trials.* Mat. xxv. 15. Luke xii. 47, 48.

IX. *God allots to every particular perſon his Trial.* He gives our capacities and opportunities, aſſigns our circumſtances and outward condition, and meaſures our afflictions and comforts. Therefore whatever our Trials may be, this ſhould calm our uneaſy minds, that they are meted out to us, by the ſame wiſe Hand, which created and governs univerſal Nature.

X. *Every one will be judged, and receive reward or puniſhment according to the circumſtances of his own particular Trial*; and all things relating to it, all advantages and diſadvantages, will be weighed in the exacteſt ballance, and determined accordingly. *Luke* xii. 47, 48. *That ſervant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes. But he, that* was in different circumſtances, and *knew not, and did commit things worthy of ſtripes, ſhall be beaten with few ſtripes.* Here obſerve, that God fully underſtands the degrees of the guilt, or virtue of particular perſons, but we do not, and therefore ſhould be cautious in judging.

XI. *There are degrees of Trial*; or temptation may be more or leſs intenſe. The ſufferings of the fleſh may be raiſed to ſuch an height of anguiſh and terror, or its paſſions ſo inflamed, as to ſuſpend the uſe of thought and reaſon.

XII. *God can raiſe or ſink our Trial as he pleaſes.* When he ſees fit, he can give a calm and quiet State; and when he pleaſeth can raiſe ſtorms about us, and heat the furnace of temptation ſeven times more than it was wont to be heated. *Job*, in his Trial by proſperity, acquited himſelf well; and under great pains and poverty, he ſined not, nor charged God fooliſhly. But at length, through the unkind uſage of his friends, and perhaps ſome other concuring circumſtances, his Trial began to be ſo hard, that he opened his mouth, and curſed his day. Whenever the Almighty pleaſeth he can permit a Trial that will ſhake the ſtrongeſt faith. Therefore,

XIII. *No good reſolutions or diſpoſitions, no degrees of ſpiritual ſtrength to which*

which we have attained, is an abſolute ſecurity, that we ſhall be for the future ſtedfaſt and unmoveable. New, or ſudden Trials, ſtronger than any we have hitherto met with, may ſhake and ſtagger the ſtability of our minds. Let no man imagine, that his former victories will exempt him from a poſſibility of falling. It is the will of God, that every man, the beſt of men, in this State, ſhould be under a conſtant neceſſity of watching. *Wherefore, let us take unto ourſelves the whole armour of God, that we may be able to withſtand in the evil day, and having done,* or overcome, *all to ſtand.* Eph. vi. 13.

XIV. *All Trial is attended with danger.* And therefore ſome, if not many, in a State of Trial, may fall into perdition. As wicked angels and men.

XV. *Our danger is not from God, but from ourſelves. God tempteth,* or ſeduceth into ſin, *no man,* Jam. i. 13, 14, 15, for this very good reaſon, becauſe he *cannot* himſelf *be tempted with evil,* ſuch is his abhorrence and deteſtation of it; and therefore cannot be inclined to draw any of his creatures into the practice of it. *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away* from righteouſneſs *by his own luſt,* and *enticed* to commit ſin.

XVI. *All temptation is vincible to thoſe that are willing to overcome.* See Prop. VI. All the admonitions, exhortations, encouragements in Scripture, ſuppoſe and ſupport the truth of this propoſition.

XVII. *We are victorious over temptation, not by our own power, but by the grace and power of God.* Even when *the ſpirit is willing, the fleſh is weak.* Mark xiv. 38. We are indeed under the higheſt obligations to uſe faithfully the powers we have already received, and no otherwiſe may we hope to be ſuperior to temptation; but it is not our own wiſdom or ſtrength that can preſerve and uphold us; for we are directed in revelation to truſt in God, and to ſeek unto him for ſuccor and deliverance, which would be impertinent were we ſufficient to ourſelves. Why ſhould we aſk help, when we do not want it? God alone *is able to keep* us *from falling, and to ſtabliſh us in every good work.* Jude 24. 2 Theſſ. ii. 16, 17. And we are abundantly aſſured, that he will give ſtrength in proportion to our Trials, and our faithful endeavors; and that our future honors will be great in proportion to the preſent greater Trials we have ſurmounted. If we have overcome much, we ſhall enjoy much. For, obſerve, the ſuccors of Divine Grace do not diminiſh the quantity of our virtue, or reward. Whatever helps our infirmity may require, our virtue is meaſured by our own ſincere deſires and endeavors, to which the Divine Aid is proportioned. So that, in moral conſtruction, it is all one as if we had overcome in our own ſtrength.

XVIII. *The means of conquering Temptation, on our part, are Watching and Prayer.* Mark xiv. 38. *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.* (1.) *Watch.* Be not ſecure; expect temptation, and be ſenſible of the danger of it, the greateſt of all dangers, the loſs of the ſoul. Be not confident of your own ſtrength. Keep out of the way of temptation. Avoid every ſnare that may intangle your minds. Indulge to no dangerous liberties; make no uncautious approaches towards folly and ſin. That may be effected by ſlow degrees, which a man would never

at

at firſt have conſented to be guilty of. He that fears falling down a precipice will be ſure not to come near it; and he that would extinguiſh the fire, ſhould withdraw the fuel. Keep thy heart with all diligence; reject every ſinful thought and ſuggeſtion. Keep the body in ſubjection to reaſon and religion by ſelf-denial and abſtinence. Beware of an undue attachment to the world. Your life and treaſure is in heaven; and there let your hearts be. Let the word of God dwell in you richly by daily meditation. *Pſal.* cxix. 11. *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not ſin againſt thee.* (2.) *Pray.* Not that we may be totally exempted from temptation; for we came into the world for this very end, that we might be tried and tempted. We cannot reaſonably expect that God, in our favor, ſhould alter the conſtitution of the world, or of the human nature; but we ſhould pray, that God would order our Trials in ſuch manner, as will beſt promote the purity, and probity of our lives. *Prov.* xxx. 8, 9. *Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me,* &c. The wiſe man doth not preſcribe any condition; that did not belong to him; but, in general, is deſirous of that ſituation in life, which God ſaw would be moſt favorable to his piety and integrity. *Lead us not,* ſuffer us not to *enter, into temptation,* i. e. ſuffer us not to fall under the power and prevalence of temptation. The example of our Lord is of the greateſt force to direct and animate us in our conflicts; he took upon him our nature, and went through all our Trials, on purpoſe to ſhew us how to behave under them; and to aſſure us that, imitating his example, we ſhall at length be partakers of his glory. And thus by his perfect *obedience,* his obedience unto death, a ſacrifice highly pleaſing to God, he recovered that life and immortality, which *Adam* forfeited by his *diſobedience.*

CHAP. IX.

Of Law, or the religious DISPENSATION, ADAM *and* EVE *were under in the* GARDEN.

GEN. ii. 17. *But of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou ſhalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.* This is *Law*; clear ideas of which are neceſſary to the right underſtanding of St. *Paul*'s writings.

Law is a rule of action, or duty, commanding or prohibiting, given by the Sovereign to moral Agents, with the penalty of death annexed. *Tranſgreſs and die,* is the language of Law. And therefore every tranſgreſſor, the moment he is ſuch, is dead in law; and, for any thing in Law, he muſt continue ſo as long as it is true, that he has violated the Law, that is, for evermore. For the Law, which condemns him, can give him no relief; as, in its own nature, it excludes repentance and pardon; neither

ther of which can take place, unleſs Law is overruled, or the execution of it ſuſpended by the authority and favor of the Sovereign. For Law would not be Law if its ſenſe or language were this, *the tranſgreſſor, who doth not repent and obtain pardon, ſhall die.* Seeing this would be to allow tranſgreſſion by Law, upon the uncertain conditions of repentance, and the Sovereign's mercy. "You may ſin with impunity, if you do but "repent, and find favor." And ſo the Law would be invalidated by itſelf, as it would allow a conditional tranſgreſſion, which would annul the annexed penalty, by ſuſpending the execution of it forever, in expectation of the ſinner's repentance, and the Sovereign's forgiveneſs. For, as the ſinner may poſſibly repent in any future time to all eternity, ſo the Law could not at any time be executed. Conſequently the Law, by this means, would be rendered for ever inſignificant, as it might be violated for ever with impunity. Therefore, to be conſiſtent with itſelf, Law muſt be conceived in abſolute terms, *ſin and die*, ſubjecting every ſinner immediately to the penalty of death, which is the *curſe of the Law.* Gal. iii. 10, 13. By this rule the Apoſtle, having proved that all fleſh have ſined, concludes, that *no fleſh*, or no part of mankind, *can be juſtified*, or intitled to life, before the Sovereign, by deeds or works of Law. *Rom.* iii. 20. For *the Law works wrath*, or ſubjects the tranſgreſſor to death, the curſe or penalty of it, *Rom.* iv. 15. On which account it is very properly called, *the miniſtration*, diſpenſation, or conſtitution, *of death*, 2 Cor. iii. 7. as it is a conſtitution which affords nothing but rigid condemnation for all tranſgreſſors.

Hence it follows, that death in *Law* is death eternal, without hopes of a revival or reſurrection. For, as before proved, it is the very nature of Law, never to remit the penalty or forfeiture. The Law, which now condemns the criminal, condemns him to death abſolutely, and for evermore; the everlaſting language of Law to every one that breaks it, and for every breach and tranſgreſſion, being this, *Thou ſhalt die.* And this is the force of the expreſſion תָּמוּת מוֹת *moriendo morieris*, "in "dying thou ſhalt die," in the Law given to *Adam.* It doth not ſpeak of the certainty of the event, as if he ſhould certainly die the day he tranſgreſſed; for the event ſhews the contrary; nor that he ſhould become mortal from a change in his conſtitution, which is a random conjecture, without any foundation in the nature of his conſtitution, which was created mortal, or in the force of the words. For the phraſe תָּמוּת מוֹת is an Hebraiſm, importing that a thing is, or is done, thoroughly, totally, in the moſt perfect manner, or the moſt intenſe degree, and is to be interpreted according to the nature of the ſubject. As *Gen.* ii. 16. אָכֹל תֹּאכֵל *comedendo comedes*, "thou mayeſt freely eat" without any reſtraint. *Chap.* xxxvii. 33. טָרֹף טֹרַף יוֹסֵף *diſcerpendo diſcerptus eſt Joſeph*, "*Joſeph* is torn all to pieces," or moſt cruelly torn to pieces. *Exod.* xxi. 19. יִרְפֵּא יְרַפֵּא *et medicando medicabitur*, and ſhalt cauſe him to be thoroughly healed. Thus the force of the words, "in dying "thou ſhalt die," is this, thou ſhalt thoroughly, utterly, totally die, or

or die for ever, without coming to life again. Thou haſt juſtly forfeited thy life and being, and ſhalt ſuffer a total and eternal extinction of it.

This ſenſe and language of Law muſt be underſtood only as a declaration, that the penalty is juſt and due; which is all that can be done by Law as a rule of juſtice, declaring, in general, that he who is diſobedient to his Maker hath juſtly forfeited his being; and that, in conſequence of his diſobedience, his Maker may juſtly deprive him of it. The Law can only declare the truth of this denunciation, as it hath no power to put it in execution; the execution of this threatening muſt neceſſarily and entirely reſt in the hands and power of the Lawgiver; who therefore may mitigate, reſpite, or ſuſpend it, as he, judging of circumſtances, ſhall in his wiſdom think proper. This is the prerogative of the Sovereign or Lawgiver, which is allowed to be fit and reaſonable all the world over. For if this were not allowed, in proper caſes, there could be no ſuch thing as pardon, or the mitigation of the ſentence of Law, either with God or man. Which in every nation, and throughout the whole univerſe, would be a ſtate of things the moſt ſevere and the moſt dreadful.

Thus room is made for the exerciſe of favor or *grace*, without doing any violence to truth. The penalty indeed is due, but according to the true natures of things, there may be alleviating circumſtances in the caſe of the tranſgreſſor, which, though Law can make no proviſion for them without deſtroying itſelf, yet the Lawgiver may, and, in reaſon and truth, ought to conſider and allow with reſpect to the infliction of the penalty. *Wiſdom* and *goodneſs* ought to have place in him, and certainly do take place in God, as well as *juſtice*. Juſtice conſiſts in executing the penalty of the Law according to the *letter* of it; which *letter* (2 Cor. iii. 6.) *killeth*, or deſtroys, the ſinner, by ſubjecting him to eternal death, or to a total extinction of life; according to which rule, there could be no place for mercy, and the whole world muſt be ruined. But *wiſdom* and *goodneſs* may mitigate the rigor of this conſtitution, not by abrogating the Law, as a rule of life; for ſo *the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy, juſt, and good*, (Rom. vii. 12.) and can never be abrogated, being, in its general intention, agreable to the everlaſting and immutable natures of things. Much leſs by finding out ſome expedient to ſatisfy *Law* and *juſtice*; which can be ſatisfied no other way than by the death of the offender. For juſtice, as uſed in this caſe, is acting ſtrictly according to Law.

Nothing, therefore, but the execution of the Law can ſatisfy Juſtice. The wiſdom and goodneſs of the Sovereign may do what the Law cannot do; that is to ſay, may ſuſpend the execution of the ſentence as long as he ſhall think fit; and ſo may leave what ſpace he pleaſes for the ſinner's repentance, and provide what means he ſhall think proper to induce him to repentance; and upon his repentance, may reſtore him to the aſſurance of eternal life, by an eternal ſuſpenſion of the execution of the Law. For as to that, he cannot be limited to any ſpace of time. If he hath a right by prerogative to ſuſpend at all, it muſt be a diſcretionary right to ſuſpend as long as he chooſeth. This is *grace*, or *goſpel*; by which the ſinner may be reſtored to the hope of immortality, and actu-

ally

ally inveſted in it, by the wiſdom and favor of the Lawgiver. This *new*, or remedying conſtitution, the Apoſtle calls *ſpirit*, which quickens the ſinner condemned to death by the *letter* of the Law, or makes him to live. 2 Cor. iii. 6. *Who alſo hath made us* [Apoſtles] *able miniſters of the New Teſtament* [or conſtitution] *not of the letter but of the ſpirit; for the letter kills, but the ſpirit giveth life.* Which ſpirit, he informs us, ver. 17, is *the Lord*, or the Goſpel of our Lord. *Now the Lord is that ſpirit*, that life-giving ſpirit, or the latter *Adam*, who is *a quickening*, or life-giving, *ſpirit*, 1 Cor. xv. 45.

That the penalty, *in the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely*, or utterly *die*, is to be underſtood, not of the event, as if he ſhould certainly die, but of the demerit of tranſgreſſion, that he would deſerve to die; and that, notwithſtanding this threatning, the Sovereign might reſpite the execution of it, and not only allow the tranſgreſſor the benefit of repentance, but alſo appoint means to lead him to repentance, and to eternal life, may be clearly proved from *Ezek.* iii. 18. xxxiii. 8, 11, 14, 15. Where God repeats the very ſame ſentence of the Law upon the wicked perſon, whom yet, at the ſame time, he charges the Prophet to warn, in order to bring him to repentance, promiſing pardon and life in caſe he did repent. *Ezek.* iii. 18. *When* [באמרי *in dicendo me*, whereas] *I ſay* [in the Law] *unto the wicked* מות תמות *thou ſhalt ſurely die; and thou giveſt him not warning, nor ſpeakeſt to warn the wicked from his wicked way to ſave his life.* Chap. xxxiii. 8. *When* [whereas] *I ſay* [in the Law] *unto the wicked, O wicked man,* מות תמות *thou ſhalt ſurely* [utterly] *die, if thou doſt not ſpeak to warn the wicked from his way*, &c. Ver. 14. *Again; when* [whereas] *I ſay* [in the Law] *unto the wicked,* מות תמות *thou ſhalt ſurely* [totally] *die; if he turn from his ſin, and do that which is lawful and right*, ver. 15. — לא יָמוּת חָיוֹ יחיה vivendo vivet, *he ſhall ſurely* [totally, eternally] *live, he ſhall not die.*

Thus Law in the rigorous ſenſe is to be underſtood; and thus it ſtands in connection with the pardon of tranſgreſſors, or their attainment to eternal life through the favor of the Lawgiver. That our firſt parents, while in the garden of *Eden*, were under Law, or a rule of Action with the penalty of death annexed, is manifeſt from the very form of the prohibition —— *But of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil thou ſhalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt utterly die.* And the Apoſtle *Paul* evidently ſuppoſes, that *Adam* was under Law, *Rom.* v. 13, 14. *For until the law* [of Moſes] *ſin was* [committed] *in the world; but ſin* [though committed] *is not imputed* [unto death] μη οντος νομου *when Law is not in being.* This ſuppoſes, 1. That Law is the only conſtitution which ſubjecteth the ſinner to death. 2. That Law was not in being in the times preceding the giving of the Law of *Moſes*. ver. 14. *Nevertheleſs death reigned from Adam to Moſes* [while Law was not in being] *even over them that had not ſined after the likeneſs of Adam's tranſgreſſion.* That is to ſay, " Death reigned all the long ſpace of about 2500 " years from *Adam* to *Moſes*, even over thoſe who did not ſin, as *Adam* " did, againſt Law, making death the penalty of their ſin; becauſe du- " ring that period, mankind were not under Law, but under the general " covenant,

"covenant, or conſtitution, of grace, given to *Adam* immediately after "his tranſgreſſion."

This evidently ſuppoſes, that *Adam* was under Law with the penalty of death annexed, while he was in the garden, or before he tranſgreſſed; and that the ſame ſevere conſtitution was again revived by *Moſes*, after it had been ſuſpended from the time of *Adam*'s tranſgreſſion till the Law was given by *Moſes*. Whence the Apoſtle concludeth, that, as death reigned all that long period, while ſin was committed in the world, and yet no poſitive Law ſubſiſted, making death the penalty of ſin; he concludes, I ſay, that men, in general, did not die for their own tranſgreſſions, but in conſequence of *Adam*'s one tranſgreſſion.

It muſt be obſerved, that the Apoſtle *Paul* doth not always uſe *Law* in the rigid ſenſe, but ſometimes for the whole Jewiſh Code, or the Old Teſtament. *Rom.* iii. 19. Sometimes for any inward principle which influenceth and governeth a man——vii. 23. Sometimes for a rule in general ——iii. 27. And ſometimes for a rule of action with the penalty of death annexed. *Rom.* v. 20. vi. 15. vii. 4, *&c.*

CHAP. X.

Of the INSTITUTION *of* MARRIAGE.

Gen. ii. 18, to the End.

ADAM's calling all beaſts and fowls by names doth not imply, that he had a perfect knowledge of the natures and intrinſic qualities of all animals; an opinion deſtitute of all evidence; but that God gave him dominion over them, as a maſter over his bond-ſervants, according to the force of the phraſe, to *call things or perſons by name*. Pſal. cxlvii. 4. Iſai. xl. 26. xliii. 1. God allowing *Adam* to give the creatures what names he pleaſed, was the form of conveying or making over to him the property of them and dominion over them. It hath alſo reference to the formation of woman; that *Adam*, our firſt parent, having ſurveyed all other animals, and having obſerved that they were created in pairs, for the propagation of their ſeveral kinds, might be ſenſible of his own ſolitary, deſtitute condition, and of the importance of his being alſo provided of a mate ſuitable to his nature, (which, by reaſon of its ſuperior excellency, could not be matched with any of the brutal kind) a companion in body and mind, fit to cohabit with him, for mutual converſe, delight, comfort, and aſſiſtance, eſpecially for propagating the human ſpecies; without which the world would have been ſtocked with only brutes.

And it was fiting, or agreable to the true nature of things, that the formation of the firſt woman ſhould be attended with ſome circumſtance expreſſive of the nearneſs of that relation, which was to be the fountain of

the

the exiſtence of all mankind, and of all the near and dear relations, ſo beneficial and comfortable to the life of man. And no circumſtances could do that more ſignificantly, than taking the woman out of a part of the man's body. Thus ſhe became another ſelf; and this was intended as a document to all poſterity, that a wife ſhould be regarded and treated as ſuch. *Epheſ.* v. 28. *So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies; he that loveth his wife, loveth himſelf.*

Ver. 23. *And* [when the Lord God brought to him the woman, his wife, and informed him in what manner ſhe was produced,] *Adam ſaid,* [with much ſatisfaction and joy] *this is now bone of my bones, and fleſh of my fleſh,* the deareſt to me of all creatures! *ſhe ſhall be called,* אִשָּׁה *Woman, becauſe ſhe is taken out of* אִישׁ *Man.* [A ſign of *Adam*'s property in her.] *ver.* 24. And the Lord God ſaid, (*Mat.* xix. 4, 5.) *Therefore ſhall a man leave his father and mother, and ſhall cleave unto his wife, and they two ſhall be one fleſh.* Thus marriage was inſtituted; a ſacred and honorable ordinance, of high diſtinction, as it is very nearly connected with the dignity and happineſs of the human nature.

And by making only one woman for one man, God plainly declared, that this relation ought to ſubſiſt between two; as the Prophet well argues, *Mal.* ii. 14, 15. *And did not he,* God, *make* but *one* couple, one man and one woman, as a rule to all mankind, that ſhould deſcend from them? *yet had he the reſidue of the ſpirit,* and could then have created more men and women, if promiſcuous converſation had been for the greater happineſs of the world. *And wherefore* did he make but *one* couple? *That he might ſeek a godly ſeed,* זֶרַע אֱלֹהִים an excellent ſeed. That man and wife, in chaſte wedlock, in ſincere and undivided affection, might propagate a poſterity to the honor and ſervice of God. This is an argument againſt polygamy and divorce, confirmed by our Lord's wiſdom and authority, *Mat.* xix. 3, 4, 5, 6. Thus mankind are brought into the world in a way ſuitably to the excellency of their nature. For, conſidering how weak and imperfect our infancy is, and in how great ignorance and diſſoluteneſs of manners we muſt neceſſarily grow up to manhood, without good diſcipline and inſtruction, it is evident, this world muſt have been the moſt wild and diſorderly ſcene imaginable, were the race of mankind propagated in a vagrant, licentious manner, without parents to own them, and by their tender care and affection to give them a good education. The production of an intelligent being, in the moſt helpleſs and expoſed circumſtances, and which grows up to a due degree of underſtanding, no otherwiſe than by good culture, ought to be attended with all the proper advantages in the propagator's power. And therefore the propagation of the human ſpecies, according to the true nature of things, ought to be guarded and directed by the beſt exerciſe of reaſon, and not left to be done in a looſe, brutal manner. God did not create man in jeſt; nor ſhould the ordinary generation of a man be made a matter of lewd jeſt, or of lawleſs paſſion. This is the rationale of marriage, and of modeſty and ſobriety.

Adam had no choice, but his deſcendents have great need to exerciſe prudence in the choice of a relation ſo important and laſting. The advice and approbation of parents is, in this caſe, one of the beſt rules.

And as marriage leſſens the Intereſts of parents in their children, it is generally not dutiful to alienate it to another without their knowledge and conſent. Nor ſhould parents unreaſonably oppoſe the lawful inclinations of their children.

Ver. 25. *And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not aſhamed,* being free from ſin and guilt.

CHAP. XI.

Of the Tempter *who deceived* Eve.

Gen. iii. 1——9.

HERE *Eve* is deceived and tempted to tranſgreſs the law of God by ſome moral agent, who could ſpeak and argue, called by *Moſes* נחש *the Serpent*; which, he ſaith, *was more ſubtil than any other beaſt of the field, which the Lord God had made.* But a beaſt of the field, how ſubtil or ſagacious ſoever, could not ſpeak and reaſon. Who then was the moral agent that deceived *Eve?* St. *Paul*, 2 Cor. xi. 3. ſpeaks of this deceiver in the ſame manner as *Moſes* doth; *I fear, leſt by any means, as the Serpent beguiled Eve through his ſubtilty, ſo your minds ſhould be corrupted from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt.* The Apoſtle did not ſuppoſe the *Corinthians* might be corrupted by the ſubtilty of an irrational creature; conſequently, he did not ſuppoſe that *Eve* was beguiled by the ſubtilty of an irrational creature. But St. *John* comes nearer to the point in *Rev.* xii. 9. xx. 2. Where he ſpeaks of the Serpent as a *deceiver*, and deſcribes him after this manner, *and the great dragon was caſt out, that old Serpent; called* otherwiſe in Scripture, *the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.* A *dragon* is a huge overgrown ſerpent. *That old Serpent*, means that Serpent, which of old, at the begining of the world deceived *Eve*, and ſtill was deceiving the world. (And in ſeveral other places of Scripture, which we ſhall preſently have occaſion to take notice of, the Devil's temptation of *Eve* is plainly alluded to.) Therefore this *Serpent*, and the *Devil* and *Satan*, are ſynonymous, and mean one and the ſame being. Hence divines have juſtly concluded, that it was the *Devil* or *Satan*, an evil or malignant ſpirit, which tempted *Eve*, in the body, or aſſuming the form and ſhape, of a Serpent; which then might be a very beautiful as well as ſagacious animal, familiar with *Adam* and *Eve*, and much admired by them.

That there are wicked and malignant ſpirits, is undeniably true from Scripture. 2 *Pet.* ii. 4. *For if God ſpared not the Angels that ſined, but σειραις ζοφου ταρταρωσας caſt them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkneſs, to be reſerved unto judgment.* [Or rather, caſt them down into a low, wretched condition, in chains of darkneſs, delivered them to be reſerved

unto judgement.] *Jude* 6. *And the Angels which kept not their firſt eſtate, but left their own habitation, he hath reſerved* δεσμοις αιδιοις υπο ζοφον *in everlaſting chains under darkneſs, unto the judgement of the great day.* Being *caſt down to hell, and delivered into chains of darkneſs*, in St. *Peter*, is the ſame as *being reſerved in perpetual chains under darkneſs*, in St. *Jude*; and may ſignify no more than, that they are degraded from their former high and glorious ſtate, and chained, or confined to, a much lower, narrower, and darker ſituation, without any hope of favor, unto the day of judgment; when they, with all workers of iniquity, ſhall be caſt into everlaſting fire, *Mat.* xxv. 41. *Rev.* xx. 10, 15. For any thing, therefore, advanced in thoſe two places, thoſe fallen angels may, at preſent, reſide in our air, and be permited to wander about in the earth.

It muſt be obſerved, that there is an ambiguity in both the words, שטן *Satan*, and Διαβολος the *Devil*. The former, *Satan*, ſignifies any adverſary among men and good angels, as well as among evil ſpirits. *Num.* xxii. 32. *And the Angel of the Lord ſaid,——behold, I went out to withſtand thee,* יצאתי לשטן for an adverſary, a Satan. So 2 Sam. xix. 22.——*Ye ſons of Zeruiah are adverſaries.* 1 Kin. v. 4. xi. 14. 23. 25. Pſal. lxxi. 13. cix. 20, 29. *Peter* was Satan, an adverſary, to our Lord, *Mat.* xvi. 23. And the unbelieving *Jews* were the Satan, or adverſaries, who hindered St. *Paul*'s return to *Theſſalonica*, 1 Theſſ. ii. 18. Διαβολος *Devil*, ſignifies an accuſer, ſlanderer. *Joh.* vi. 70. —— *and one of you*, Judas, *is* Διαβολος *a Devil.* 1 Tim. iii. 11. *Their wives muſt be grave,* μη Διαβολους not Devils, *i. e.* accuſers, *ſlanderers.* 2 Tim. iii. 3. *falſe accuſers*, Tit. ii. 3. Thus it may be applied to any wicked perſons, who ſlander, accuſe, and perſecute the people of God. And this ambiguity in the ſenſe of thoſe two words, שטן and Διαβολος, may render it doubtful how ſome particular paſſages of Scripture are to be underſtood.

That thoſe two words are uſed to ſignify one and the ſame wicked ſpirit, who, with many others his angels, or under-agents, are converſant in our world, and endeavour to draw men into ſin, and do miſchief among us, is very evident from revelation. As in the caſe of our firſt parents, of *Job*, whoſe children and ſubſtance were deſtroyed, and his body afflicted with a grievous diſorder by *Satan*, Job i. 12, *&c.* ii. 6, 7; of our Lord, who was tempted of the *Devil*, or *Satan*, Mat. iv. 1, 3, 10. Mark i. 13. Luke iv. 2. Which temptation, under all its circumſtances, can never be reſolved into an allegory; much leſs can it be ſuppoſed to be all tranſacted within our Lord's own mind, as if the Devil, or Satan, was no other than the ſuggeſtions, or thoughts, that aroſe in his own heart, which is very abſurd. Nor can the following texts be naturally underſtood of any other than a real Devil or Satan. *Mat.* xiii. 39. *The enemy that ſowed the tares is the Devil*, [and his inſtruments] Mark iii. 26. *How can Satan caſt out Satan?* Joh. viii. 44. *Ye are of your father the Devil.* Acts x. 38. —— *Healing all that were oppreſſed of the Devil.* 2 Cor. xi. 13, 14. *For ſuch are falſe apoſtles, deceitful workers, transforming themſelves into the Apoſtles of Chriſt. And no marvel, for Satan himſelf is transformed into an Angel of Light.* Heb. ii. 14. *That through death*

death he might deſtroy him that had the power of [ſubjecting our firſt parents, and their poſterity, to] *death, that is, the Devil.* 2 Tim. 2, 16. —— *recover themſelves out of the ſnare of the Devil.* Jam. iv. 7. *Reſiſt the Devil, and he ſhall flee from you.* 1 Joh. iii. 8. *He that commiteth ſin, is of the Devil; for the Devil ſinneth from the begining* [of the world, alluding to his tempting our firſt parents into ſin;] *for this cauſe the Son of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the Devil.* Jude 9. *Yet Michael, the Archangel, when contending with the Devil, he diſputed about the body of Moſes.* And generally, *Satan* and *Devil* are thus to be underſtood in the New Teſtament, the few places before mentioned only excepted. Though where the Devil is principally intended, his inſtruments, or wicked agents among men, may, at the ſame time, be connoted.

Beſides Satan, or the Devil, the Scripture frequently mentions other evil ſpirits, called δαιμονια, δαιμονες, *Dæmons*, which we tranſlate *Devils*. That theſe Dæmons, however underſtood in prophane authors, do belong to the Devil's retinue, and may be his angels or under-agents, over whom he is chief or prince, will appear by comparing *Mat.* xii. 22, 24, —— 28. *Luke* x. 17, 18. xi. 15, 18. Thoſe who in the Goſpels are ſaid to be δαιμονιζομενοι poſſeſſed by Dæmons, in *Acts* x. 38. are ſaid to be *oppreſſed of the Devil*, υπο του Διαβολου, as they were under the power of his agents. Thus we may conceive of *the Devil and his angels*, Mat. xxv. 41. *the Dragon and his angels*, Rev. xii. 7. He is the prince and head, and thoſe dæmons are his ſubjects. They are often ſpoken of in the plural number, as being many; though *Satan*, or the *Devil*, is always in the ſingular, as being but one ſingle ſpirit, and chief over all the reſt. But, as before obſerved, his angels, or agents, may ſometimes be included with him.

The characters which the Devil or Satan ſuſtains in Scripture, are theſe, the *great Dragon*, or fierce Devourer, the *old Serpent*, full of villainous ſubtilty, *Rev.* xii. 9. The *Wicked One*, Mat. xiii. 38. 1 Joh. iii. 12. A *Murtherer and Liar*, Joh. viii. 44. *Ye are of your father, the Devil, and the luſts of your father will ye do, he was a murtherer from the begining*, [in effecting the death of *Adam* and his poſterity; and thus he may be ſaid to have had the power of death, *Heb.* ii. 14.] *and abode not in the truth, becauſe there is no truth in him. When he ſpeaketh a lie, he ſpeaketh of his own, for he is a liar*, [as he was to *Eve*,] *and the father of it. The Accuſer of the Brethren*, Rev. xii. 10. [See Job i. 6——13. ii. 1——7.] *A roaring Lion*, [the lion roars only when he is hungry, Pſal. xxii. 13. Ezek. xxii. 25.] *ſeeking whom he may devour.* The *Prince of the World*, meaning, as it is corrupt and wicked, *John* xii. 31. xiv. 30. xvi. 11. *The Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of Diſobedience*, the idolatrous heathen, *Epheſ.* ii. 2. Here the Devil is repreſented as a prince, or ſovereign, at the head of a kingdom, which ſtands in oppoſition to, and is at war with, the kingdom of *Chriſt*; who was manifeſted as his antagoniſt, *that he might deſtroy the works of the Devil*, 1 John. iii. 8.

The Dæmons are characterized as the *Devil's angels*, Mat. xxv. 41. As *unclean Spirits*, Mark v. 2, 8, 12. Luke iv. 33, 36. viii. 27, 29. *Evil*, wicked, *Spirits*, Luke viii. 2.

Theſe vicious ſpirits, the Devil and his angels, when permitted, are

capable of doing any miſchief to the eſtate, body or mind, 1 *Sam.* xvi. 14. *Job.* i. 12, *&c.* ii. 6, 7. *Mark* iii. 23, 26. *Luke* xiii. 16. 1 *Cor.* v. 5. 1 *Tim.* i. 20. Nor is there any abſurdity, any thing inconſiſtent with the Divine Goodneſs, in ſuppoſing that evil ſpirits may inflict calamities and diſorders upon mankind. For they are only inſtruments in God's hands, under his direction and controul, as much as any other cauſe whatever; and ſo muſt come under the ſame rules, as any other means, which Providence may imploy in diſtreſſing or deſtroying human life, as ſtorms, inundations, the paſſions and powers of wicked men, a putrid air, vitiated humors in the body, *&c.* In all theſe caſes, whatever is the inſtrumental, God is the appointing and directing cauſe; and it would have been all one, whether he had ſent a good or evil angel, or had only changed the temperature of the air, to deſtroy the *Iſraelites* by peſtilence, 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 15, 16. Or to ſlay *Sennacherib*'s army. 2 *King.* xix. 35. 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 21. In correcting or puniſhing by diſeaſes, or other diſtreſſes, God may uſe what inſtruments he pleaſes.

Thus far we may go upon this part of the ſubject, and not much further. The world of ſpirits lies ſo far out of our ſight, that we can know no more of them, than what is reveled. Nor have we principles ſufficient to inable us to form clear and compleat notions of every thing ſaid concerning them even in revelation.

That which moſt of all requires our attention, is, that the Devil delighteth in ſeducing mankind to ſin againſt God, and takes every advantage, and uſes every wile to effect his wicked purpoſe. *Rev.* xii. 9. *The great dragon, called the Devil and Satan, deceiveth the whole world.* Mat. xiii. 39. *The enemy that ſowed them*, the tares, *i. e.* wicked men, *is the Devil.* Of which we have a ſpecimen in his temptation of our firſt parents. He concealed himſelf in the body, or ſhape of a Serpent, probably, at that time, a creature admired by *Adam* and *Eve* for it's beauty and ſagacity. He firſt addreſſed the woman, when alone, and at a diſtance from her huſband; and firſt endevored to weaken her ſenſe of the obligation of the Divine Prohibition, by repreſenting it as uncertain or unreaſonable, *ver.* 1. *Yea, hath God ſaid, ye ſhall not eat of every tree in the garden?* "Surely you miſtake him; it can never be ſo; for why ſhould "God debar you of any of the innocent and delightful fruits this gar-"den yields?" The woman expoſed herſelf to the greateſt danger by deliberating with the Tempter, upon a matter which ſhe ſhould not have heard ſo much as called in queſtion without abhorrence. But ſhe was not aware of his wicked deſign; and therefore, in much ſimplicity, gave him a full account of the law they were under, *ver.* 2, 3. Which only gave him, on the other hand, an opportunity of contradicting it by a moſt bold and impudent lie, *ver.* 4. *Ye ſhall not ſurely die.* Yea, he aſſures her, they ſhould receive great advantage by eating the forbidden fruit, *ver.* 5. *For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes ſhall be opened; and ye ſhall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.* To favor his aſſertion, he perverts the word of God, by wreſting the name God had given the tree; as if it had been called, *the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*, becauſe God was aware it would endow them with the moſt exalted and extenſive knowledge; whereas it had its name upon a very different account.

Thus Satan perſuades men to have hard thoughts of God, as if he envied our happineſs, and laid the reſtraints of his law upon our appetites out of ill-will; but infinite Goodneſs is not capable of envy. Thus he tempteth us to be uneaſy in the condition Providence has alloted us, and prompts us to be ambitious of things too high for us. And thus he deludeth with falſe hopes of benefit and advantage from ſin; and, when this laſt point is gained, we fall an eaſy prey to the Tempter. *ver.* 6. *And when the woman ſaw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleaſant to the eyes, and a tree to be deſired to make one wiſe, ſhe took of the fruit thereof and did eat.* "She ſaw it was to be deſired to make one wiſe." What wrought this opinion in *Eve* was, poſſibly, the aſſurance the Serpent gave her, that he which, ſhe very well knew, before was, like other brutes, dumb and irrational, was, by the admirable virtue of the fruit, advanced in ſpeech and reaſon, as ſhe ſaw, to an equality with herſelf, the moſt excellent creature in the earth; and, therefore, ſhe needed not doubt but it would, in the ſame proportion, exalt the human nature to the high perfection of the angelic order. This would paſs for demonſtration with her, who knew not that it was an evil ſpirit that acted and ſpake in the Serpent. But this is only my own conjecture. —— *And ſhe gave alſo unto her huſband with her, and he did eat*: being, probably, perſuaded (beſides the arguments the Serpent uſed with *Eve*) by the ſtrong affection they had for each other. Thus the Devil, by tempting our firſt parents to tranſgreſs the law, ſubjected them, and their poſterity in them, to eternal death. Thus he was a murtherer, and may be ſaid to have *had the power of death.* Heb. ii. 14.

CHAP. XII.

Reflections on the DEVIL'S TEMPTATIONS.

BY ſearching the Scriptures we have found, that there is a malicious Spirit which, by Divine Permiſſion, ranges about this world, attended with many more of the ſame depraved nature; and, as any opportunity offers, is endeavouring to draw men from the practice of virtue, into all wickedneſs and alienation from the truth.

To prevent any cavils againſt the ſcriptural account of this wicked Spirit, let it be well obſerved,

I. That we cannot be ſure, from any unaſſiſted knowledge or obſervation of our own, that this earth is not frequented by numerous ſpirits of a nature much ſuperior to the human. Our knowledge even of the animals, which naturally belong to our globe, hath been, and probably ſtill is, very defective. Without the help of microſcopes we could never have diſcerned vaſt tribes of inſects, which we now plainly ſee do live

and move even in our own bodies, and in all parts of the earth and water. And even with this advantage of ſight, there may ſtill be a world of ſmaller animals, which our ſenſes cannot reach. Much more may myriads of ſpirits be mixed amongſt us, which come not under our obſervation. Therefore, as without the aid of microſcopes we ſhould never have diſcovered the moſt numerous part of the inhabitants of our earth; ſo neither, without the light of revelation, can we be aſcertained, what ſpirits are and act in the region of our air. And revelation is a mean as proper, at leaſt, for diſcovering the one, as our own artificial inventions for diſcovering the other. But revelation informs us, that angels, both good and bad, are converſant in this world; which may be true, though we have no diſtinct, ſenſible perceptions of their exiſtence and operations. Under former diſpenſations of religion they might appear, and act in a ſenſible manner; but under the preſent diſpenſation they may, for wiſe reaſons, (particularly, becauſe we are now ſufficiently inſtructed in their nature and agency,) be wholly inviſible: nor may we be capable of diſtinguiſhing their ſecret internal impreſſions from the ſuggeſtions of our own minds; or the external, kind aſſiſtances of good angels, or the malicious injuries of evil angels, from the common courſe of Providence.

II. That we are now upon trial hath been already proved; and that our trial is well and wiſely adjuſted, cannot be doubted. We ourſelves are by no means capable of judging what kind of trials are moſt ſuitable to our own ſpirits, becauſe we know but little of the nature of them. To ſettle the kind and degree of our Trials, belongs entirely to him, who alone underſtands the nature of our minds, and the deſigns of his own wiſdom. Therefore, if we are ſhocked when we hear God hath permitted many evil ſpirits to range our world, and to exerciſe their malice in tempting mankind, we are really ſhocked at our own ignorance; ſeeing this method of trial, as well as the reſt, is under regulations of infinite wiſdom, and deſigned for the purpoſes of infinite goodneſs.

Objection. "Suppoſe God hath for wiſe ends permitted ſuch be-
"ings to mingle among mankind, is it not very ſtrange that any ſhould
"be found ſo malicious as to imploy that permiſſion to the worſt of pur-
"poſes? How can we ſuppoſe any ſpirits, any intelligences, eſpecially
"of a ſuperior nature, ſo far abandoned to all ſenſe of goodneſs and
"virtue, as to indeavor without ceaſing the corruption and perdition of
"their fellow-creatures?"

Answer. That wickedneſs exiſts in the univerſe is too plain from the ſtate of things in that part of it, which we inhabit; where we ſee great numbers, in ſpight of their own reaſon and underſtanding, and of all the inſtances of God's love and goodneſs, and of all the moſt evident and powerful arguments to virtue and piety, who not only are very vicious themſelves, but take an unnatural pleaſure in tempting and corrupting others, and making them as bad as themſelves. It cannot then be hard to ſuppoſe, that there are other ſpirits, in other circumſtances, who, in the ſame manner, oppoſe God; that is to ſay, oppoſe truth and virtue. For the Devil oppoſeth and ſeteth himſelf againſt God, not by might and power, as if he were able to contend with the Almighty, but only

as he oppoſeth virtue and truth; juſt as wicked men do among ourſelves. Indeed, we men are under ſtrong temptations from the fleſh, and the objects that relate to it; but the ſpirits we are ſpeaking of, may be under as ſtrong temptations of ſome other kind, that we are not acquainted with; they may, by ſome ſinful purſuits and compliances, have ſunk themſelves into the laſt degrees of moral pravity, and even be more wicked than the wickedeſt man in the earth, more blind to the goodneſs of God, and more fearleſs of his wrath. Nor are ſuperior natural abilities an abſolute ſecurity againſt the very worſt moral corruption. For we do actually find, that great knowledge and underſtanding are ſo far from always making men good and virtuous, that, on the contrary, theſe are often in a high degree the inſtruments of ſin and diſobedience; being wholly imployed in finding out pleas and pretexts for the moſt abandoned iniquity.

Thus you ſee it is very poſſible ſuch vicious ſpirits may be, may be mixed among us, and permited to tempt us; and, according to Scripture repreſentations, they are very dangerous enemies. For,

I. Satan is continually going about ſeeking all advantages againſt us, Job i. 7. *The Lord ſaid unto Satan, Whence comeſt thou? Satan anſwered, and ſaid, —— From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.* And from the query in the next verſe, *Haſt thou conſidered my ſervant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and eſcheweth evil?* And alſo from what our Saviour ſaith to *Peter*, Luke xxii. 31. *Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath deſired to have you, that he may ſift you as wheat*; it appears, that he is inquiſitive into the characters of men, and buſily ſeeks, and gladly lays hold of any occaſion to try, and, if poſſible, to overthrow their integrity. 1 *Cor.* vii. 5. *Defraud you not one the other, except it be with conſent for a time, that ye may give yourſelves to faſting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.*

II. We may ſuppoſe a ſpirit of ſuperior faculties to be very ſubtil in underſtanding our various conſtitutions and inclinations, and the particular ſins to which our circumſtances do expoſe us; and in laying his baits, and addreſſing his temptations accordingly.

III. Such a tempter can apply a great variety of machinations, devices, [νοήματα, 2 *Cor.* ii. 11.] and wiles [μεθοδείας, *Epheſ.* vi. 11,] to deceive. This is ſeen in the caſe of *Eve*. And in tempting our Lord, it is very obſervable, how he varied his devices, and ſhifted the ſcene of temptation, to fix, if poſſible, ſome ſtain upon his ſpotleſs mind. He can put himſelf into any ſhape, either of terror, or pleaſing allurement; either as a roaring lion, or an angel of light, [2 *Cor.* xi. 14.] Sometimes he works by his agents, imploying thoſe who are already inſnared to draw in others; ſo *Eve* was his tool to tempt *Adam*: ſometimes injecting into our minds unrighteous, impure ſuggeſtions, [*Luke* xxii. 3. *Acts* v. 3.] ſometimes taking the word out of our heart, [*Luke* viii. 12.] or mixing tares with the good ſeed, [*Mat.* xiii. 25.] and corrupting our minds from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt.

But then, all this muſt be underſtood under the following reſtrictions.

1. That the Devil can neither hurt us, nor ſo much as attempt to

hurt us, further than God permits. He is not like the pretended evil god of the *Manichees*, eternal, self-existent, almighty, and independent, but as much under the power of God as the weakeſt reptile under our feet. When God gives him a commiſſion, he cannot act beyond it; and when he has no commiſſion, he is chained up and can do nothing. He is therefore no other than an agent, entirely and always in God's hand, to be uſed as he ſees fit.

2. Nor can he any ways pollute our minds, further than we ourſelves do conſent. If God permits, poſſibly he may work upon the humors of the body, he may inflame our paſſions, abuſe our imaginations, or ſuggeſt evil things to our thoughts; but unleſs we willingly admit thoſe impreſſions, he cannot poſſibly ſtain our conſciences with ſin.

3. God hath not only furniſhed means and ſtrength to reſiſt him, but hath appointed that, if we do reſiſt him, he ſhall be conquered and vanquiſhed. *Jam.* iv. 7. *Reſiſt the Devil, and he will*, he ſhall, he muſt, *flee from you*; not by his own choice, but by the will and power of God. *The God of* our *peace* and ſafety *ſhall bruiſe Satan under our feet.* And ſuch a victory ſhall turn to the praiſe and glory and eſtabliſhment of our virtue. Hence it follows,

1. That it muſt be our own act and deed if we are overcome by the temptations of the Devil. It is common for people to conſider themſelves as altogether *paſſive* in this caſe, and to aſcribe the wickedneſs they commit to the power of temptation; whereas, in truth, ſo far as we are tempted *effectually* we are *active*, we conſent and agree to the temptation, we are drawn away of our own luſt and enticed, *Jam.* i. 14. Satan tempts, yet can have no advantage over us but what we chuſe to give him. And therefore,

2. It muſt be an aggravation of any crime that it was done under the power and influence of this wicked ſpirit. For we muſt be *the children of diſobedience*, we muſt have abandoned ourſelves to wickedneſs, before Satan can *work in us*. If *Satan* can fill our hearts, conſider in what a wretched condition we muſt be. We muſt have abuſed the faculties of our minds, we muſt have deſpiſed all the riches of Divine Goodneſs, we muſt have ſhut our eyes againſt the light of ſaving truth, hardened our hearts againſt the fear of God, ſeared our conſciences, ſtifled many and ſtrong convictions, done deſpite to the Spirit of Grace; we muſt have withdrawn ourſelves from God, till he hath forſaken us; we muſt have advanced from one degree of iniquity to another, till our hearts are prepared to be the ſeat and reſidence of the unclean ſpirit, the murtherer, the father of lies, the prince of darkneſs. A condition unſpeakably deplorable!

With men of virtue and piety he hath no power, though he may vex and aſſault them, but only with the vicious. And they not only imitate his wickedneſs, which is bad enough, and conſtitutes him their *father*, but likewiſe are under his government, which is ſtill worſe, and conſtitutes him their prince and ruler. Moſt dreadful caſe, to be the children of ſuch a father, the ſubjects of ſuch a prince, the children of perdition, the ſubjects of the enemy of all righteouſneſs! To have the powers of our minds, deſigned for the nobleſt acts and enjoyments, under the dominion of error and luſt; to have the ſpirits created for eternal happineſs

in

in union, with God, in ſlavery to the vileſt of beings; to have the ſouls, for whom Chriſt ſhed his blood, to deliver them from iniquity, to purify them into the Divine Image, and to prepare them for everlaſting ſalvation; to have thoſe ſouls quite inſenſible to all that is true and excellent, heavenly and divine, guided by the grand deceiver, in the power of the deſtroyer, and by him puſhed on in the way of iniquity to eternal perdition, how frightful is the reflection; how dreadful muſt the ſtate of ſuch ſouls be!

To prevent our falling into ſuch a ſad condition, and to ſecure ourſelves from the encroachments of this wicked ſpirit, let us ever be mindful that we have ſuch an enemy, and that, without due care and circumſpection, we ſhall fall under his power. Let us carefully guard our hearts, and obſerve well the temper and frame of our minds, that we may ſeaſonably reſtrain every inordinate affection, and immediately reject every evil thought and ſuggeſtion which ſtarts up in our minds. Be ſober, be vigilant. Nothing gives this adverſary greater advantage than ſenſual indulgences. Mortify the fleſh with the affections and luſts. Shun all intemperance and exceſs; and never dare to venture, how little ſoever, into the way of temptation and ſin. And let us be ſure to keep cloſe to God in prayer, and other exerciſes of religion. Thus we ſhall put ourſelves under the banner of the Prince of Life, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and ſhall be kept by the power of God, through faith, unto ſalvation.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Conſequences of ADAM'S TRANSGRESSION.

Gen. ii. 7, to the End.

WE are now come to a very grand point in Theology, the Fall of Man, or the Conſequences of *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion upon himſelf and his poſterity. Which Conſequences Divines, both Papiſt and Proteſtant, have generally, and for a long tract of time, repreſented to be thoſe that follow, namely, "the guilt of *Adam*'s firſt ſin "imputed to, or charged upon, all his poſterity —— a total defect of "that righteouſneſs, wherein he is ſuppoſed to have been created —— "the corruption of the human nature, whereby all mankind are utterly indiſpoſed, diſabled, and made oppoſite unto all that is ſpiritually "good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually; which "corruption of our nature is the ſource of all wickedneſs that is commited in the world. — Further, by *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion all mankind "were deprived of communion with God —— and all, as ſoon as ever "they come into the world, under his diſpleaſure and curſe, being by "nature the children of wrath, bond-ſlaves to Satan, juſtly liable to all "puniſhments

"punishments in this world, and in the world to come, to an everlaſt-
"ing ſeparation from the comfortable preſence of God, the moſt grie-
"vous torments in ſoul and body without intermiſſion in hell-fire for
"ever."

This is an affair of the moſt dreadful importance, and requires to be examined with all poſſible care and impartiality. For an error in this point will affect the whole ſcheme of Chriſtianity, pervert and abuſe our conſciences, and give us very wrong notions of God and of ourſelves. Upon this article I have examined the Scriptures, with diligence and impartiality, in the treatiſe entitled —— *The Scripture Doctrine of original Sin, propoſed to free and candid Examination* —— in the ſtudy of which this is a proper place to exerciſe your thoughts and judgments.

[* Adam having tranſgreſſed the law, not only loſt a claim to life, but became obnoxious to death, which was *death in law*, or eternal death. And had the law been immediately executed, his poſterity, then included in his loins, muſt have been extinct, or could have had no exiſtence at all. For, the covenant of innocence being broken, there was no covenant or conſtitution ſubſiſting upon which *Adam* could have the leaſt hope of the continuance of his own life, and conſequently, could have no proſpect of any poſterity. Thus *in Adam all die*. While things were in this ſtate, under broken law, and before a promiſe of favor, or grace, in this interval, for any thing *Adam* could know, he, and the whole world in him, were utterly loſt and undone for ever. But our merciful God and Father had quite different views. He graciouſly intended to make *Adam*'s ſin, and his being expoſed to eternal death, an occaſion of erecting a new diſpenſation, a diſpenſation of grace in the hands of a Mediator. According to which, *Adam* was aſſured that he ſhould not immediately die, but ſhould live to have a poſterity by his wife. So *Adam* underſtood what the Lord God ſaid, *ver.* 15. And upon this he gave his wife a new name, (*ver.* 20.) חַוָּה *Life*, or *Life-giving*, for joy that mankind were to be propagated from her, when he expected nothing but immediate death in conſequence of his tranſgreſſion.]

[† God graciouſly intended, after *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion, to erect a diſpenſation of grace, for the redemption of mankind. Which grace was declared, and, conſequently, which diſpenſation was eſtabliſhed, (*Gen.* iii. 15. *And I will put enmity*, &c.) before the ſentence of death was pronounced upon *Adam*, (ver. 19. *Duſt thou art, and to duſt thou ſhalt return.*) Death therefore, in that ſentence, ſtands under the new diſpenſation, or the diſpenſation of grace, and for that reaſon cannot be *Death in* LAW, or eternal death; but *death in* DISPENSATION, or death appointed for wiſe and good purpoſes, and to be continued only ſo long as God ſhould think fit. And thus alſo *all die in Adam*; thus *by man came death*; thus *by one man ſin entered into the world, and death by*, or in conſequence

* Take this in, as a note, p. 18. of *Scripture Doctrine of original Sin*, at the paragraph, 1. *Whereas Adam had before*, &c.

† Take this in, as a note, p. 66. of *Scripture Doctrine of original Sin*, at *No. Immediately upon the anulling the firſt covenant*, &c.

quence of, his *ſin*. But it was the high and glorious purpoſe of God, that his beloved Son, *the ſeed of the woman*, having, in our fleſh, performed the moſt perfect and compleat obedience, ſhould be inveſted with dominion and power to raiſe all men from the dead, and to give eternal life to all them that tread in the ſteps of his obedience. Thus, *as by man came death, by man came alſo the reſurrection from the dead; for as in Adam all die, ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.* 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. Thus, *as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even ſo by the righteouſneſs of one, the free gift came upon all men unto juſtification. For as by one man's diſobedience the many were made ſinners; ſo by the obedience of one ſhall the many be made righteous.* Rom. v. 18, 19.]

CHAP. XIV.

Of the Origin of SACRIFICES.

Gen. iv. 1——6.

WHERE *Cain* and *Abel* perform an act of religious devotion, by way of Oblation or Sacrifice. The queſtion is, whether this kind of worſhip was of divine or human inſtitution. They who are of the latter opinion alledge, "that we read of no command "from God for ſacrificing; therefore men did it of their own heads, "out of a grateful inclination to return unto God ſome of his own "bleſſings, and to acknowledge him the abſolute proprietor of all their "enjoyments; though they had no directions from him about it." Anſwer. This ſeems highly improbable. For how came *Abel* to offer his Sacrifice in *faith* of God's acceptance, (*Heb.* xi. 4.) if his faith had nothing to warrant it but his own imagination? Human imagination, or opinion, never was, or ever can be, either the ground or object of *faith*. It is ſaid, *Gen.* iv. 4. that God had reſpect to, or ſhewed his approbation of, both *Abel* and *his offering*; or in the Apoſtle's words, *he obtained witneſs, that* himſelf *was righteous, God teſtifying of his gifts*, that they were right, and offered in a right manner. On the other hand, he cenſured *Cain* as having preſented his Oblation in ſuch a manner as was not pleaſing to God. Which evidently ſuppoſes a previous inſtitution, and a rule which *Cain* was, or might have been acquainted with. For had there not been ſuch a rule given, how could he have been blamed for not obſerving it? It is abſurd to ſay, he tranſgreſſed a rule of his own imagination and invention.

The inſtitution not being mentioned in a hiſtory ſo conciſe argues nothing. Other things are alſo omited, as religious aſſemblies, *Enoch*'s prophecy, *Noah*'s preaching, the peopling of the world, or the increaſe of *Adam*'s family. Things well known, or generally ſuppoſed, when the

the hiſtorian wrote, needed not to be mentioned, but might be taken for granted. The only proper and concluſive argument would be to prove, "that in thoſe early days they had no communication with, or revela-"tion from God; and therefore, having no way of knowing what the "mind of the Lord was, were under a neceſſity of inventing ſomething "of their own." But this is far from being the caſe. God, in ſome viſible form, frequently appeared, and made his mind known to *Adam*, and to all the ſucceeding Patriarchs, mentioned in the book of *Geneſis*, for the ſpace of 2315 years. Yea, he converſed and reaſoned with and inſtructed *Cain* himſelf. When therefore *Adam*, and all the other Patriarchs, had the fulleſt opportunity of knowing from God himſelf, what kind of worſhip was moſt acceptable to him, there was no need of their own invention; and it is abſurd to ſuppoſe that they followed no other guide.

In the infancy of the church they wanted direction, and, without doubt, were directed in every thing relating to religion eſpecially, ſo far as was agreable to that diſpenſation. Doubtleſs *Adam* was inſtructed by God to ſacrifice. And it is not improbable that thoſe beaſts, with the ſkins of which *Adam* and *Eve* were clothed, *Gen.* iii. 21. were ſlain as Sacrifices. God certainly inſtructed our firſt parents in the faith and worſhip, which the alteration in their circumſtances required. Having made a moſt gracious covenant with them (*ver.* 15.) it is not unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that he alſo ſignified to them, that they ſhould, for a perpetual ratification and aſſurance of it to their faith, offer to him Sacrifices. For by the blood of Sacrifices covenants were ratified in after times. The eating of the tree of life, was a covenanting action, (aſſuring immortality to their continued obedience) ſuitable to a ſtate of innocence. But the mactation of a living creature, (expreſſing the deadly nature of ſin, at the ſame time that it aſſured them of eternal life through a ſacrificed Redeemer) was more ſuitable to a ſtate of guilt.

Ver. 3. *Cain brought* מִפְּרִי *of the fruit of the ground*, &c. ver. 4. *And Abel alſo brought of the firſtlings of the flock*, &c. "As there were ſome "ſolemn times of making their devout acknowledgments to God; ſo, "I doubt not, there was ſome ſet place, where they aſſembled for that "purpoſe. For the Hebrew word for *brought*, is never uſed in rela-"tion to domeſtic, or private Sacrifices; but always in relation to "thoſe public Sacrifices, which were brought to the door of the taber-"nacle of the congregation. As *Lev.* iv. 4. *He ſhall bring* וְהֵבִיא "*the bullock to the door*, &c. Which occurs all along, eſpecially in the "ninth chapter of that book.

"And therefore, I ſuppoſe, they brought theſe Sacrifices, here men-"tioned, to ſome fixed [public] place, where the *Shechinah*, or glorious "preſence of God appeared. For as they muſt have ſome ſetled place, "where they [publicly] performed ſacred offices, it is moſt reaſonable "to think it had, in thoſe early days, reſpect to the *Shechinah*, or Di-"vine preſence, as well as afterwards under the Moſaic diſpenſation, "[when the Divine Preſence reſided] in the tabernacle and temple. "And therefore they are ſaid to *appear before God*, [Exod. xxiii. 17. "xxxiv. 24.

" xxxiv. 24. Pſal. xlii. 2, &c. or to *preſent themſelves before the Lord*, Job i. 6." *]

That ſome viſible token of the preſence of God appeared in their religious aſſemblies in thoſe earlieſt days of the church, and ſpake and converſed with them, as occaſion required, is evident enough. So the Lord God appeared frequently and familiarly to *Adam*. He held a conference with *Cain* in ſuch a manner as plainly ſhews it was no extraordinary thing. And *when the ſons*, or children, *of God came together to preſent themſelves before the Lord*, the Lord is repreſented as diſcourſing with *Satan* about the character and circumſtances of *Job*. Job i. 6—12. ii. 1—7.

While men were not ſo numerous, but that they might all aſſemble together at one place, probably the *Shechinah* ſtatedly appeared among them every ſabbath. But when they were ſo numerous, that they could not ordinarily meet together once a week, and therefore were under a neceſſity of performing their worſhip in ſeparate and remote places; yet the *Shechinah*, or token of the Divine Preſence, might ſtill remain and appear as uſual in that original place, where *Adam* and his immediate deſcendents had firſt attended upon divine ſervice, and where the Patriarchs, in a right line deſcended from *Adam*, had their place of reſidence. There, probably, *Noah* builded his altar, and there the Lord converſed with him. *Gen.* viii. 20, &c. ix. 1——18. There *Rebekah* went to *enquire of the Lord*. Gen. xxv. 22, 23; and ſhe received an anſwer, probably, from the *Shechinah* or Divine Preſence.

From all this it ſeems not unlikely, that *Cain* and *Abel*'s Offerings were performed before the whole aſſembly of *Adam*'s family, (which then muſt have been conſiderably increaſed,) and that the divine acceptance of the one, and rejection of the other, was ſignified by ſome viſible mark, which appeared and was obſerved by the whole congregation. It would add very much to *Cain*'s diſguſt to find himſelf ſo openly diſparaged, and ſunk ſo much in the favor of God, and the eſteem of the whole family, below his younger brother; over whom, on that ſole account, as he was the firſt-born, he claimed pre-eminence, and expected, whatever his character was, pious or impious, to have been preferred before him.

The mark, by which the Lord God teſtified his acceptance of *Abel* and his Sacrifice, was, probably, a ſtream of fire iſſuing from the *Shechinah*, which conſumed his Sacrifice. So *Gen.* xv. 17. *A ſmoking furnace and burning lamp*, i. e. the Shechinah, *paſſed between the pieces* of the Sacrifice, and conſumed them, in confirmation of the covenant. And we have many other examples of this kind in ſacred Hiſtory; as when *Moſes* offered the firſt great burnt-offering. *Lev.* ix. 24. When *Gideon* offered upon the rock. *Judg.* vi. 21. When *David* ſtayed the plague. 1 *Chron.* xxi. 26. And *Solomon* conſecrated the temple. 2 *Chron.* vii. 1. And when *Elijah* contended with the *Baalites*. 1 *Kings* xviii. 38, &c. whence the *Iſraelites*, *Pſal.* xx. 3, wiſhing all proſperity to their king, pray that God *would accept* [דְּשָׁנֶהָ *turn into aſhes*] *his burnt-offering*.

Ver. 6, 7.

* Biſhop *Patrick*'s Comment. in loco.

Ver. 6, 7. The Lord God reproved *Cain* for the diſguſt and indignation he had conceived againſt his brother, inſtructing him in terms of divine acceptance. *If thou doſt well, ſhalt thou not be accepted?* Moſt certainly —— For I have an impartial regard to true piety, whereſoever I find it. *But if thou doſt not well, ſin* (i. e. the puniſhment of ſin, as *ver.* 13, and *chap.* xix. 15, and ſeveral other places,) *lieth* couching *at the door*, ready to fall upon thee; *and unto thee ſhall be his deſire, and thou ſhalt rule over him.* Three things are here ſuggeſted to appeaſe his reſentment. 1. That the reaſon of his not being reſpected was not in his brother, but in himſelf; for if he had done well, he would have been as much reſpected. 2. That if he did ill, he had no reaſon to expect the Divine favor, but the reverſe. 3. That this ſhould not alter his civil right, nor give *Abel* any authority over him, but he ſhould ſtill retain the privilege of his birth-right. Note —— This ſhews, that the privileges of the birth-right had been previouſly ſettled, either by divine appointment, or approbation.

But the rancor of *Cain*'s mind could not thus be cured. Being *of the Wicked One*, the murtherer, who had lately attempted to deſtroy all mankind, he took an opportunity, and ſlew his brother. Poſſibly the next ſabbath, *Abel*'s place being empty in the aſſembly of *Adam*'s family, the Lord addreſſed himſelf to *Cain*, charged him with his crime, and, in puniſhment of it, baniſhed him from the country, where *Adam* and his family reſided; by rendering the ground barren to him, inſomuch that, notwithſtanding all his endeavonrs, it ſhould not yield him any increaſe. This would neceſſarily oblige him to go ſeek a ſubſiſtence in ſome other place. To this ſentence *Cain* remonſtrates as too ſevere, [and by the bye, his familiar, indeed too familiar, manner of anſwering the *Shechinah*, ſhews, that ſuch appearances of the Divine Preſence were common and cuſtomary] apprehending he ſhould thereby *be hid from the face of the Lord*, (ver. 14.) or deprived of his care and inſpection, and conſidered by all mankind as a ſtrolling brute, expoſed to their hatred, and in continual danger of being deſtroyed. But God, who for wiſe and holy ends often protects and prolongs the lives even of very wicked men, intended that *Cain* ſhould live; either that he might have ſpace to repent, or, being impenitent, might remain a monument of Divine Juſtice. And therefore, before the whole aſſembly, threatened a worſe puniſhment than *Cain*'s to the man, who ſhould, by killing him, defeat the divine ſentence, or fruſtrate his grace.

And the Lord ſet a mark אות *upon Cain*, &c. In the Hebrew it is, *And the Lord ſet*, or exhibited, *a true token to Cain, that no one, who met him, ſhould kill him*; i. e. gave him ſome pledge or aſſurance, declared either in words, as by an oath, or by ſome outward token, that his life ſhould be preſerved. So the ſpies gave *Rahab a token*, אות אמת, that her life, and the lives of all her relations, ſhould be preſerved. *Joſhua* ii. 12—14. This token to *Rahab* ſeems to have been a ſolemn oath; for the *ſcarlet cord* was not a token to *Rahab*, but to the ſpies, to diſtinguiſh her houſe. *N. B.* I do not find in Scripture, that אות ever ſignifies a mark, or brand, impreſſed upon a man's body, but always ſome external aſſurance, or pledge given by God. *Gen.* ix. 13. xvii. 11.

1 *Sam.*

1 *Sam.* ii. 34. xiv. 10. 2 *King.* xix. 28. *Iſai.* xxxviii. 7, 8. *Jer.* xliv. 29, *&c.* *&c.*

Ver. 16. And *Cain*, by force of the divine curſe, *went out from the preſence of the Lord*, i. e. out of the aſſembly, where the Lord appeared, and was worſhipped, and never enjoyed the bleſſings and advantages, which attended the aſſembly, any more.

CHAP. XV.

Of the SHECHINAH, *and Divine* APPEARANCES.

HAVING had occaſion, in the foregoing chapter, to mention the *Shechinah*, (a rabinical word from שכן *to dwell*,) which is uſed to ſignify a glorious Appearance, covered, or attended with a cloud, denoting the extraordinary preſence of God, who is neceſſarily every where preſent; this may be a proper place to examine the Scripture upon the point of Divine Appearances. They are mentioned in both parts of the holy Scripture; ſometimes without taking any notice of a viſible glory, and often expreſly mentioning it; as in the following places. *Gen.* xv. 17. *The ſmoking furnace and lamp of fire*, וְלַפִּיד אֵשׁ, are juſtly ſuppoſed to correſpond to the *cloud and pillar of fire*, afterwards mentioned, as repreſenting the Divine Preſence. Probably, in a viſible glory the Lord appeared to *Abraham*, Gen. xvii. 1; and to *Iſaac*, *chap.* xxvi. 2; and certainly to *Moſes* in the buſh. *Exod.* iii. 2. The *Shechinah* was alſo in the cloud and pillar of fire. *Exod.* xiii. 21. For it was the ſame cloud that afterward reſted upon the tabernacle, when it was ſet up, and is called *the Cloud of the Lord.* Exod. xl. 38. Numb. x. 34. For *the glory of the Lord* was within the tabernacle upon the mercy-ſeat, as the cloud was on the outſide of it. *Exod.* xl. 34, 35. And it is there deſcribed, as in *Exod.* xiii. 21. that it appeared as a cloud upon the tabernacle by day, and as a fire by night. *Exod.* xl. 38. *Numb.* ix. 15, 16.

Thus it conducted and guarded them in their journeys, [and then alone was ordinarily ſeen by the whole congregation] *Exod.* xl. 36. *Numb.* ix. 17, 18, *&c.* [*Iſaiah* alludes to this *chap.* iv. 5, 6.] And, as thus the token of the Divine Preſence went before them, *the Lord* is ſaid *to go before them*, and *to lead them* by this cloud. And out of this cloud, or rather from the glory of the Lord, within the tabernacle, the Lord ſpake unto *Moſes* what he ſpake and delivered in the books of *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, and *Numbers.* Numb. vii. 89. *And when Moſes went into the tabernacle of the congregation, to ſpeak with him*, [God,] *then he heard the voice of one ſpeaking unto him from off the mercy-ſeat, that was upon the ark of the teſtimony, between the two Cherubims, and he ſpake unto him*; agreeably

ably to what God had ſaid, *Exod.* xxv. 22. *I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-ſeat, from between the two Cherubims, which are upon the ark of the teſtimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Iſrael.* And there, as upon a throne, between the Cherubims, the *glory of the Lord* had its reſidence in the *holy place* in *Solomon*'s temple, after it had taken poſſeſſion of the houſe, at the conſecration of it. 1 *King.* viii. 10, 11. [and there it continued till the Babyloniſh captivity.] Hence God is ſaid *to dwell between the Cherubims.* 1 Sam. iv. 4. 2 Sam. vi. 2. 2 King. xix. 15. Pſalm. lxxx. 1, *&c.* The *glory of the Lord* appeared to *Iſaiah* in the temple. *Iſai.* vi. 1. and to *Ezekiel*, with many awful circumſtances. *Ezek.* i. 28. iii. 23. x. 4. xi. 23, xliii. 2, 4, 5. xliv. 4. *The glory of the Lord ſhone round about the ſhepherds, and the angel of the Lord came upon them,* Luke ii. 8, 9. and to the three Diſciples at the tranſfiguration, *Mat.* xvii. 5. *While he yet ſpake, behold, a bright cloud overſhadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which ſaid, this is my beloved Son,* &c. The *Shechinah* appeared to *Saul*, Acts ix. 3. *Suddenly there ſhined round about him a light from heaven*; and to *Peter* in the priſon. *Acts* xii. 7.

Theſe are the moſt remarkable Divine Appearances mentioned in Scripture. Now the queſtion is, who, in ſuch inſtances, was the perſon that appeared and ſpake? For example, *Exod.* iii. 14, it is written, *And God ſaid unto Moſes,* I AM THAT I AM: *and he ſaid, thus ſhalt thou ſay unto the children of Iſrael,* I AM *hath ſent me unto you.* Who was it that ſpake to *Moſes?* Or what notion are we to form of that being, who pronounced thoſe words, I AM THAT I AM? What makes the enquiry neceſſary is this, that in the ſecond verſe it is ſaid, *The* ANGEL OF THE LORD *appeared in a flame of fire out of the midſt of a buſh.* And yet it is ſaid, concerning the ſame perſon, *ver.* 4. *When* THE LORD *ſaw that he turned aſide to ſee,* GOD *called to him out of the midſt of the buſh.* ver. 6. *Moreover he ſaid, I am the* GOD *of thy father, the* GOD *of Abraham, the* GOD *of Iſaac,* &c. And, *ver.* 14. GOD *ſaid unto Moſes,* I AM THAT I AM. *ver.* 15. GOD *ſaid unto Moſes, Thus ſhalt thou ſay unto the children of Iſrael, the* LORD GOD *of your fathers hath ſent me unto you.* Now, moſt certain it is, that it was the ANGEL of the LORD that appeared to *Moſes.* And certain it is, that the *Angel of the Lord*, that appeared to *Moſes* in the buſh, did, out of the buſh, pronounce the ſeveral ſentences I have quoted. It was the *Angel of the Lord*, who ſaid, *I am the* GOD *of thy father*: I AM THAT I AM. But *the Angel of the Lord God*, is not the *Lord God*, whoſe Angel he is. How then can it be ſaid, that the *Lord God* appeared and ſpake to *Moſes?* This is the difficulty; and the ſolution is ready, and very clear.

The ſolid and inconteſtible foundation of the ſolution is laid by our Lord himſelf, who perfectly underſtood the whole affair of Divine Appearances, in *John* v. 37. *And the Father himſelf, who hath ſent me, hath born witneſs of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor ſeen his ſhape.* John i. 18. *No man hath ſeen God at any time.* He is *the inviſible God, whom no man hath ſeen, or can ſee.* It is often ſaid, that the Lord, the moſt high God, *appeared* to the Patriarchs, to *Moſes*, and to the Prophets, the anceſtors of the *Jews*; but, according to our Lord's rule, the Appearance, form, or ſhape, which they ſaw, was not the

Appearance

Appearance of the Lord God himſelf, for never, at any time, did they ſee his ſhape. Again, it is often ſaid, that the moſt High God *ſpake* to the Patriarchs, to *Moſes*, and the Prophets; but our Lord affirms, that they never heard his voice at any time. How ſhall we reconcile this ſeeming inconſiſtency?

The true ſolution, according to the Scriptures, is this. That the Lord God never ſpake or appeared in perſon; but always by a proxy, *Nuncius*, or meſſenger, who repreſented him, and therefore ſpake in his name and authority, ſaying, *I am God all-ſufficient*; *I am the God of Abraham*; I AM THAT I AM. Which words were pronounced by an Angel; but are true, not of the Angel, but of God, whom he repreſented, and upon whoſe errand he came. So a herald reads a proclamation in the king's name and words, as if the king himſelf were ſpeaking. Or, to uſe a more common inſtance, ſo a brief is publiſhed in the king's name and language, as if the king himſelf were addreſſing the congregation where it is read. Thus, GEORGE *by the grace of God*, &c. *whereas it hath been repreſented to* US, &c. *therefore they have humbly beſought* US *to grant unto them* OUR *Letters Patent*, &c. *unto which their requeſt* WE *have graciouſly condeſcended*, &c. But much, ſurely, would he be miſtaken, who ſhould imagine, that the perſon who reads the proclamation, or the brief, was his Majeſty KING GEORGE, becauſe he uſeth his words, and ſpeaks as if the king himſelf were ſpeaking.

That this is a true repreſentation of the caſe, will appear,

I. From the ſignification of the word ANGEL, [מַלְאָךְ ἄγγελος] which is a Greek word, and both in that language, and in the Hebrew, ſignifies a *meſſenger*, or nuncius, an *ambaſſador*; one who acts and ſpeaks, not in his own name, or behalf, but in the name, perſon, and behalf of him that ſends him. And thus the word is frequently rendered in our tranſlation. And had it always been rendered the *meſſenger of the Lord*, inſtead of *the Angel of the Lord*, the caſe would have been very plain. But *Angel*, being a Greek word, which the Engliſh reader doth not underſtand, it throws ſome obſcurity upon ſuch paſſages.

II. It is in Scripture expreſly ſaid, that it was an *Angel*, a *nuncius*, or meſſenger of the Lord, who ſpake, even when the Lord himſelf is ſaid, or ſuppoſed to ſpeak. As *Gen.* xvi. 7. *The Angel* מלאך found Hagar; and, *ver.* 10, *ſaid unto her, I will multiply thy ſeed exceedingly.* Gen. xviii. 1. *The Lord appeared unto Abraham*, ver. 2. *And he lifted up his eyes, and lo, three men*, three Angels in the ſhape of men, *ſtood by him.* Now one of thoſe men, or Angels, was a *nuncius* ſent particularly to *Abraham*; for *ver.* 10, *he ſaid*, as he was ſiting at meat, *I will certainly return unto thee; and lo, Sarah ſhall have a ſon.* *And* Sarah heard it, *ver.* 12. and laughed. *ver.* 13. *And the Lord*, i. e. the Angel who ſpake in the Lord, *ſaid, wherefore did Sarah laugh?* Ver. 14. *Is any thing too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return unto thee, and Sarah ſhall have a ſon.* Again, *Gen.* xxii. 15. *And the Angel*, or meſſenger, *of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven*, ver. 16, *and ſaid, by myſelf have I ſworn, ſaith the Lord, that in bleſſing I will bleſs thee*, &c. Upon which place St. AUSTIN, quoted by Bp. PATRICK in his Commentary upon the place, argues in this manner.

"In the begining of this chapter, *ver.* 1, 2, we read, that GOD "*tempted* [tried] *Abraham*, and bad him go, and offer up his ſon *Iſaac*; "but, *ver.* 11, 12, *The Angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, "and ſaid, Lay not thy hands upon the lad.* What is the meaning of this? "Will they ſay, that *God* commanded *Iſaac* to be ſlain, and that his "*Angel* forbad it? And that *Abraham* obeyed the Angel, who bid him "ſpare his ſon, againſt God, who ordered him to ſlay him? This is "ridiculous, and not to be endured. The plain meaning is, that God "ſpake both times, in the one caſe, and the other; but he ſpake by "an Angel, who was his miniſter. That is the reaſon, Angels ſome-"times ſpeak as if they were the Lord, becauſe they ſpake in the Lord's "name. Juſt as when a public crier in a court pronounces the ſen-"tence of the judge, it is not entered in the public records, that the "crier pronounced that ſentence, but the judge, in whoſe name and "authority the crier pronounced it." Thus St. AUSTIN. — In *Exod.* iii. 2, the Angel, *nuncius*, or meſſenger of the Lord appeared unto *Moſes*; and ſaid, *I am the God of Abraham*; I AM THAT I AM; ſpeaking not of himſelf, but of the Lord whoſe meſſenger he was.—*Joſhua* vi. 2. *The Lord ſaid unto Joſhua.* It appears from *chap.* v. 13, 14. that it was not the Lord who ſpake, but an Angel, under the title of *the Captain of the Lord's Hoſt.*

Further, it is evident from every part of the law of *Moſes*, that it was given and ordained by God, the LORD, the moſt high God; and in his name it is every where worded and enjoined, *Exod.* xx. 1, 2. *And God ſpake all theſe words, ſaying, I am the Lord thy God. And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes. And Moſes ſaid unto the Lord.* And yet it appears from repeated teſtimonies in the New Teſtament, that it was not the Lord, who immediately himſelf ſpake, either to *Moſes*, or to all the people. Thus *Stephen, a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghoſt.* Acts vii. 35. *This Moſes, whom they refuſed,——did God ſend to be a ruler, and a deliverer by the hands of the Angel*, or meſſenger, *who appeared to him in the buſh*; and who is called *the Angel of his*, God's, *preſence.* Iſai. lxiii. 9. ver. 28. *This* [Moſes] *is he that was in the church in the wilderneſs, with the Angel who ſpake to him in Mount Sinai.* [Note —— it was an Angel, a meſſenger, that ſpake to *Moſes* in Mount *Sinai.*] ver. 53. —— *who have received the law by the diſpoſition*, in the Conſtitutions publiſhed by the miniſtry, *of Angels.* Gal. iii. 19. *Wherefore then ſerveth the law of Moſes? It was added becauſe of tranſgreſſions, till the ſeed ſhould come, to whom the promiſe was made; and it*, the law, *was ordained by* the miniſtry of *Angels.* Heb. ii. 2. *For if the word ſpoken by Angels was ſtedfaſt*, meaning the law given by *Moſes.* That law was ſpoken to him, and to all the people, by angels, who ſpake, not of themſelves, but what was communicated to them from God.

III. The *Jews* very well underſtood the nature of thoſe manifeſtations. They knew when a miraculous voice came to them, ſpeaking as God himſelf would ſpeak, that it was a meſſenger from God, who ſpake in his name and ſtead, *Gen.* xvi. 7, 9. The Angel of the Lord appeared and ſpake to *Hagar*; yet ſhe knew it was a Divine Appearance, and that the Angel perſonated the moſt High God. Therefore, *ver.* 13. *ſhe called the name of the* LORD, *that ſpake unto her, thou* GOD *ſeeſt me.*—— Gen. xxxii. 24.

Gen. xxxii. 24. *There wreſtled a man with Jacob.* Now *Jacob* knew that man was a meſſenger from God; and therefore, *ver.* 30. *he called the name of the place Peniel; for I have ſeen God face to face*, i. e. I have ſeen an evident manifeſtation from God. —— The common token, that ſuch were Divine Manifeſtations, was the glory which attended the meſſenger, who pronounced the words of the meſſage. And whenever that glory appeared, the *Jews* knew the meſſage came from God, whoever it was that brought it. Thus *Luke* ii. 9. *The Angel of the Lord came upon* the ſhepherds, *and the glory of the Lord ſhone round about them.* They knew the glory they ſaw was not the glory of the Angel, but a token of the Divine Preſence and authority, ſignifying that the meſſage came from the Lord. Therefore they ſay, *ver.* 15. *Let us now go —— and ſee this thing, which the* LORD *hath made known unto us.* And ſo *Saul* knew the light ſhining from heaven, was the glory of the Lord, and an infallible proof of a Divine Manifeſtation. And, 2 *Pet.* i. 17. *He*, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *received from* God the Father, *honor and glory, when there came ſuch a voice unto him from the excellent Glory, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed.* Whoever the meſſenger was that uttered theſe words, the Diſciples, that ſaw the transfiguration on the mount, knew that the thing came from God the Father; becauſe *the voice*, or words, *came from the excellent Glory*, or the *Shechinah*.

It is very remarkable, that when our Lord was exalted to univerſal dominion, at the right-hand of God, as head of the church, he alſo had his ANGEL, *Nuncius*, or meſſenger, whom he diſpatched upon the affairs of his government. *Rev.* i. 1. *The revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, which* GOD *gave unto him, to ſhew unto his ſervants things which muſt ſhortly come to paſs; and he*, Jeſus, *ſent and ſignified it by his* ANGEL *unto his ſervant John.* And therefore, though the glorious appearance, *Rev.* i. 13—17. is rightly underſtood of our Lord, yet it was not he in perſon, but his ANGEL, Nuncius, or meſſenger, who repreſented him, and appeared and ſpake in his name. And ſo in other places of the *Revelation*; where, nevertheleſs, our Lord may juſtly be ſuppoſed to appear and ſpeak.

We may here obſerve, that it hath been commonly ſuppoſed, that our Lord, before his incarnation, was the ANGEL that appeared in the *Shechinah*, and ſpake to *Adam* and the Patriarchs, to *Moſes* and the prophets, and is called *the Angel of his preſence*, Iſai. lxiii. 9. *In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his preſence ſaved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.* To this purpoſe they underſtand, *John* xii. 41. *Theſe things ſaid Eſaias, when he ſaw his glory and ſpake of him*, i. e. "ſaw, at that time, "the glory of *Chriſt*, who was then the medium of divine manifeſtations, "*and ſpake of him*, and of his times, or what would happen with reſpect "to the reception of the Goſpel, when he ſhould preach it to the Jews." [Dr. *Doddridge*.] But, *when he ſaw his glory*, may be well interpreted, "when he [Eſaias] foreſaw his glory, or the glorious manifeſtations, "which God intended to make of himſelf to the Jews by his Son." [Dr. *Clarke*.] So *John* viii. 56. *Abraham ſaw*, foreſaw, *my day, and was glad.* Thus alſo, as he tabernacled among the Jews in the cloud of glory, they judge *he was in the form of God*, Phil. ii. 9; which form, or

likeneſs he was not greedy of retaining, *but emptied himſelf of it, and took upon him the form of a ſervant.* But this form, or likeneſs of God, may refer to *the glory which he had with the father before the world was*, John xvii. 5. With regard to which he may alſo be ſaid to be *the image of God*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. — *the image of the inviſible God*, Col. i. 15. — *the brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon*, Heb. i. 3. However, I ſhould willingly admit that ſuch Expreſſions refer to the glorious appearances of the *Shechinah* under the Old Teſtament, were it not for this objection, that our Lord muſt then be ſuppoſed to publiſh the law, and to preſide over the Jewiſh diſpenſation, as well as over the Goſpel; which ſeems to be quite inconſiſtent with *John* i. 17. *The law was given by Moſes, but grace and truth came by Jeſus Chriſt.* See alſo *Heb.* i. 1, 2. ii. 2. [Here the Apoſtle's argument proceeds wholly upon the difference of the perſons, the *Angels*, who publiſhed the law, and the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, who publiſhed the Goſpel; but his argument hath no ſtrength at all, if thoſe perſons are the ſame*. See Mr. *Pierce* upon the text.] *Heb.*

* But may we not diſtinguiſh between the λογος as a Proxy of Deity, or as perſonating the glorious Majeſty of God in the *Shechinah*, and in that capacity, by the Holy Spirit, inſpiring the Prophets, and preſiding over the Angels at the giving of the law; and the ſame λογος acting and ſpeaking to us, in his incarnate ſtate, in the capacity of a Prophet? In the former capacity he may be conſidered in relation to God, as perſonating God, or as in the form of God, whoſe agent he was under *every* diſpenſation which God erected; and therefore as doing nothing in his own perſon. For thus, his perſon would coincide with that of the ſupreme God, and is not to be conſidered as different from him, but as acting in his name and authority. In the latter capacity he may be conſidered in relation to *us*, and to our ſalvation by the Goſpel; for the accompliſhment of which, he ſtooped ſo far as to take upon him our nature, and, not as perſonating God, but in quality of a Prophet ſent from God, to publiſh among us in his own perſon, and name, the promiſe of eternal life.

And muſt not this bring us under greater obligations to attend to him; and be ſufficient to diſtinguiſh him as acting in delivering the law, and preaching the Goſpel? He that was in the form of God, and repreſented God, when the law was delivered, and who delivered it by the miniſtry of Angels and of *Moſes*; that tranſcendently glorious perſon afterwards became a man, and in his *own* perſon, and by his *own* miniſtry, delivered to us the Goſpel. Doth not this, in a very peculiar manner, recommend to us the Goſpel, and oblige us to attend to its doctrines? *Heb.* i. 1, 2. *God who at ſundry times, and in divers manners, ſpake in time paſt unto the fathers* BY THE PROPHETS, *hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us* BY HIS SON, *&c.* God always ſpake by Proxy. And the Apoſtle might ſpeak as he doth, although it be true, that our Lord was the Proxy of Deity under the Old Teſtament diſpenſation. For the Apoſtle here conſiders, not who was the Proxy of Deity, but by whom he immmediately ſpake to the fathers in the Jewiſh church, and to us in the Chriſtian church. And the oppoſition lieth between, not the Proxies or Repreſentatives of Deity, but between THE PROPHETS in the former diſpenſation, and THE SON OF GOD in the latter. By his Son, as his Proxy, he ſpake to the Prophets, and by the Prophets he ſpake to the Old Teſtament fathers. But under the New Teſtament his well beloved Son, who before was indeed in the form of God, as his Proxy, himſelf became a Prophet, and in the form of a man ſpake to us immediately as a Prophet.

Heb. iii. 1 — 3. [Here *Moſes*'s houſe, and *Chriſt*'s houſe, or diſpenſation, are clearly diſtinguiſhed.]

But ſuppoſing our Lord was the Angel, who appeared and ſpake under the Old Teſtament, yet it muſt be remembered, that he appeared and ſpake only as an *Angel*, or *Nuncius* from God. Which character he expreſsly ſuſtains, *Mal.* iii. 1. — *and* הָאָדוֹן *the Lord, whom ye ſeek, ſhall ſuddenly come to his temple*; *even* מַלְאַךְ הַבְּרִית *the meſſenger*, Angel, *of the covenant*, [not the Sinai, but the Goſpel covenant,] *whom ye delight in.*

CHAP. XVI.

Of the GLORY OF THE LORD, *as it hath relation to the* SHECHINAH, *or Divine* APPEARANCES.

IT is deſerving of our further obſervation, that the *Shechinah*, or divine appearances, as a token of God's preſence, and of his guidance, encouragement, and protection of his people, is often mentioned in the Old Teſtament under the character of THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH. As in *Exodus* xvi. 7, 10. xxiv. 16. *Lev.* ix. 6, 23. *Num.* xiv. 10, 21. 22. xvi. 19. xx. 6. *Hebrew* ix. 5. — *the Cherubim of the glory*, i. e. the glory of Jehovah, dwelling between the Cherubim, over the Mercy-ſeat. St. *Peter* alludes to this, 2 Epiſt. i. 17 — *there came a Voice from the excellent Glory.* This token of God's preſence is otherwiſe called his *Preſence*, Exodus xxxiii. 14. and his *Name*, as that ſignifieth a mark of diſtinction or eminence. *Deut.* xii. 5. 2 *Chron.* vii. 16.

Certainly it was the peculiar honor and advantage of the *Iſraelites*, that they had ſuch a public viſible manifeſtation of the preſence and favor of God; [Rom. ix. 4. *Who are Iſraelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the Glory*, or the glorious manifeſtations of God.] And was well adapted to that diſpenſation of the church; eſpecially in the early times of its inſtitution under *Moſes*, when they could not, by abſtract reaſoning, be ſo well acquainted with the nature and perfections of God; and therefore ſtood in need of ſome extraordinary viſible token, to ſtrike and affect their minds with a ſenſe of his preſence, power, authority, favor and protection.

And as *the glory of the Lord* appeared publicly in favor of the *Iſraelites*, to guard and guide them, when they left the land of *Egypt*; ſo *the glory of the Lord* is uſed figuratively to denote, in general, his ſpecial bleſſing, favor, preſence, and protection, upon any occaſion. *Iſaiah* lviii. 8. *Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry*, &c. *Then ſhall thy light*, proſperity, *break forth as the morning, and thy health ſhall ſpring forth ſpeedily; and thy righteouſneſs*, [ſalvation, Saviour] *ſhall go before thee*, THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH

HOVAH *ſhall be thy rereward*, ſhall advance in thy rear, or behind thee, to guard thee; alluding to the *Shechinah* as it guarded and guided the children of *Iſrael*. *Iſa.* lx. 1. *Ariſe, ſhine; for thy light*, happineſs, *is come, and* THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH *is riſen upon thee.* Thus it is figuratively to denote the divine favor and guardianſhip.

And in the ſame manner it is applied to the Chriſtian church, as denoting all the light and bleſſings, grace, and glory of the Goſpel. *Num.* xiv. 21. *But as truly as I live, all the earth ſhall be filled with* MY GLORY; ſpeaking of the Goſpel, in contradiction to the Jewiſh peculiarity. *Iſa.* xxxv. 1, 2. *The wilderneſs of the ſolitary place ſhall be glad for them; and the deſert ſhall rejoice and bloſſom as the roſe*, &c. *They ſhall ſee* THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH, *and the excellency of our God. Iſai.* xl. 3, 4, 5. *The voice of him that crieth in the wilderneſs, prepare ye the way of the Lord; make ſtraight in the deſert a high way for our God. Every valley ſhall be exalted*, &c. *And* THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH *ſhall be revealed, and all fleſh* ſhall ſee it together, [יחדו compleatly, or in it's perfection.] *for the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it. Hab.* ii. 14. *For the earth ſhall be filled with the knowledge of the* GLORY OF GOD, *as the waters cover the ſea.*

All theſe paſſages are to be underſtood of the Goſpel manifeſtations of God's grace, which is his glory. *Exodus* xxxiii. 18, 19. *And Moſes ſaid, I beſeech thee, ſhew me thy* Glory. *And he ſaid, I will make all my* Goodneſs *paſs before thee, and I will proclaim the name of Jehovah before thee*; namely, as in Chap. xxxiv. 6, 7. *The Lord — proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God merciful, and gracious*, &c. The goodneſs and mercy of the Lord is *the glory of the Lord.*

And obſerve, how the Apoſtle, 2 Cor. iii. 13 — 18. alludes to the glory of the *Shechinah*, with which *Moſes* converſed in the mount; and which impreſſed ſuch a ſplendor upon his countenance, as obliged him to cover it with a veil, when he returned to the people; who otherwiſe could not bear to look upon the exceſſive brightneſs of the glory of God, reflected from his, *Moſes*'s face. In alluſion to this veil, obſcuring the brightneſs of *Moſes* his countenance, the Apoſtle informs us, ver. 14, 15. that there was an obſcurity, a veil over his writings; which veil, after *Chriſt* was come, and had taken it away, from the Old Teſtament, the *Jews*, through unbelief, transferred to their own hearts, and ſo remained ignorant of the true meaning of *Moſes* and the prophets. *But*, ver. 18. *we all*, [all we Chriſtians, in oppoſition to the blinded *Jews*, ver. 13, 14.] *we all with open*, unveiled, face, having *the* GLORY *of the* LORD, *reflected upon us* [from the face of Jeſus, Chap. 4, 6.] *as from a mirrors are*, in the diſpoſitions of our minds, *changed into the ſame image* of moral excellency, *from glory to glory*, or in order to the moſt compleat glory, *even as by the ſpirit of the Lord.* John i. 14. *The word was made fleſh, and tabernacled among us; and we*, as well as his firſt diſciples, *beheld the glory of Jeſus Chriſt, as of the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth.* The Son of God became a man ſubject to like frailties with us, and lived and converſed freely amongſt men; teaching them fully and plainly the great truths relating to God's gracious purpoſes concerning the redemption and eternal ſalvation of mankind.

kind. And thus God, and his merciful regards to men, his preſence in his church, and his power, ingaged to keep his ſervants, and to bring them to the poſſeſſion of eternal life, is more clearly and illuſtriouſly manifeſted in the Goſpel, than his favorable preſence and protection were by the *Shechinah* in the temple, or in any other place, among the *Iſraelites*.

We, who under the Goſpel diſpenſation, are ſo well acquainted with the nature and perfections of God, do not ſtand in need of any extraordinary viſible token of the divine preſence. The glorious truths of the Goſpel, revealed by *Jeſus Chriſt*, are our *Shechinah*, ſhining from him upon our minds, and filling them with comfort and joy, in the aſſured hope of his preſent care and bleſſing, and of the poſſeſſion of glory, honor and immortality in the future world. And this is to us us a *Shechinah*, infinitely preferable to the viſible appearances in the church of old.

CHAP. XVII.

The SCRIPTURE-CHRONOLOGY *from the* CREATION *to the* DELUGE.

Gen. 5th Chapter.

WE are now got as far as the Deluge. And here, according to *Moſes*, who here begins his genealogies, is the proper place for conſidering how far we are advanced in the age, or chronology, of the world. For in this chapter he gives the names and ages of the Patriarchs from *Adam* to *Noah*, together with the age of every father, at the time when every ſon was born. And if we add together the ages of the fathers, when their ſeveral ſons were born, and the years of *Noah*'s life at the time of the Deluge, we ſhall form chronological tables of the beſt authority, from the Creation to the Deluge, after this manner.

Yrs. bef. the Birth of Chriſt.	Proofs.	Table I.		Years, and begat	II. Born in Yr. of world	III. Lived in all, Years	IV. Lived with *Adam* Yrs.	V. Lived with *Noah* Yrs.
4004	Gen. v. 3,	Adam lived	130		1	930	800	
	6,	Seth lived	105		130	912	695	84
	9,	Enos lived	90		235	905	605	179
	12,	Cainan lived	70		325	910	535	234
	15,	Mahalaleel lived	65		395	895	470	366
	18,	Jared lived	162		460	962	365	
	21,	Enoch lived	65		622	365	243	600
	25,	Methuſelah lived	187		687	969	56	595
	28,	Lamech lived	182		874	777		
2348	vii. 11,	Noah, at the Deluge	600	Yrs. old	1065			
		In all	1656	Years from the Creation to the Flood.				

According to table I. if you add together the years from the creation of *Adam* to the birth of *Methuſelah* you will find that *Adam* was 687 years old when *Methuſelah* was born. And, as *Adam* lived in all 930 years, as in table III. if you ſubtract 687 from 930, there will remain 243, which is the year of *Methuſelah*'s life when *Adam* died. Therefore

Methuſelah lived 243 years with *Adam*. In the ſame way of computation you may find how long any of the junior Patriarchs lived with *Adam* as in table IV.

If to the year of *Enos*'s life, when *Cainan* was born, and to the year of *Lamech*'s life, when *Noah* was born, you add all the intermediate years, you will find they are 821, which is the age of *Enos* when *Noah* was born: but *Enos* lived 905 years; from which ſubtract 821, and the remainder is 84. the number of years in which old *Enos* and young *Noah* were cotemporaries. And in the ſame way you may find how long any of the ſenior, preceding Patriarchs, lived with *Noah*, as in table V.

So likewiſe if you add together the years from the birth of *Methuſelah* to the flood, you will find them to be 969; which is juſt the time that *Methuſelah* lived, as in table III. Hence we may conclude, that *Methuſelah* died juſt before the flood came; and *Noah* being then 600 years old, he had lived juſt ſo long with *Methuſelah*.

So again, if you add the years from the birth of *Lamech* to the flood, you will find them to be 782 years; and whereas *Lamech* lived but 777 years, it follows, that *Lamech* died five years before the flood came. Therefore, all the Patriarchs, except *Noah*, were dead, when *Noah* entered into the ark.

From the above account it appears, that *Methuſelah* lived with *Adam* 243 years, and doubtleſs converſed with him the greateſt part of that time; and ſo, had opportunity abundantly ſufficient to receive from *Adam* an account of what he knew concerning the creation, and all the tranſactions and events contained in the firſt four chapters of *Geneſis*. And as *Noah* lived 600 years with *Methuſelah*, he had time ſufficient to learn the ſame account from him, and may well be ſuppoſed to have carried it with him intire into the ark. And this may be one reaſon of the longevity of the antediluvians; which muſt be reſolved into the ſole will of God, and can be accounted for no other way. They lived ſo long, in order to preſerve, and hand down to poſterity, religious knowledge, in that period of time when it could not be committed to writing; and when it would have been either totally loſt, or miſerably depraved, had men lived no longer than 70 or 80 years. Beſides, their longevity contributed to the more ſpeedy peopling of the world, and to the bringing of neceſſary arts, in tillage, building and clothing, to a greater perfection.

Ver. 1. זֶה סֵפֶר תּוֹלְדֹת אָדָם *This is the book of the generations of Adam*, that is to ſay, this is the pedigree, or the genealogy of the deſcendants of *Adam*. So *Mat.* i. 1. *The book of the generation*, is the genealogy *of Jeſus Chriſt*.

Ver. 3. As we know that *Adam* had both *Cain* and *Abel* before *Seth* was born, ſo both he, and the other Patriarchs, might have ſeveral other children before thoſe that are named in this liſt; it being, probably, the deſign of *Moſes* to ſet down only thoſe perſons, by whom the line of *Noah* was drawn from *Seth*, by their true anceſtors, whether they were the eldeſt of the family, or not.

Ver. 21.—and begat *Methuſelah*. It is the ingenious conjecture of *Ainſworth*,

Ainſworth, that מתושלח is a word compounded of מת *he dieth*, and ושלח for ומשלח *and an emiſſion*; as much as to ſay, *when he dieth, there ſhall be an emiſſion*, or inundation, *of waters*. Thus *Enoch* may be ſuppoſed to have predicted the deluge in the name, which he gave his ſon *Methuſelah*, with this particular circumſtance, that the deluge ſhould happen in the year, in which his ſon ſhould die; as it certainly did. However we have the authority of an Apoſtle, that *Enoch* was a Prophet, and did foreſee, and foretel the deluge to that generation of men. *Jude* ver. 14, 15. *And Enoch alſo, the ſeventh from Adam, propheſied of theſe*, or of ſuch men as theſe, *ſaying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thouſands of his Saints*, or with myriads of his holy Angels, *to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly commited, and of all their hard*, unreaſonable, contumacious, blaſphemous *ſpeeches, which ungodly ſinners have ſpoken againſt him*. This, I apprehend, in its primary intention, is a prediction of the deluge, by which God would puniſh that impious race, which then inhabited the earth. But as their deſtruction by the deluge is made an example of the vengeance which God will execute upon all impenitently wicked at the laſt day, (2 *Pet.* ii. 5.) ſo *Enoch*'s Prophecy will ſuit the wicked of all ages, who ſhall certainly meet with a like reward of their deeds.

Ver. 22. ויתהלך חנוך את־האלהים *And Enoch walked* diligently *with*, or unto, *God*, and in a manner agreeable and pleaſing to God. And ſo did *Noah*, chap. vi. 9. In this conſtruction (with את התהלך) is uſed but once more, 1 *Sam.* xxv, 15; and there it implies friendſhip and benevolence on the part of thoſe they converſed with. Therefore the Apoſtle rightly inſerts the idea of *pleaſing God* in the account he gives of *Enoch*'s tranſlation, *Heb.* xi. 5, 6; and argues well, that *Enoch*'s pleaſing God, was the effect of his faith in God, and in a future reward. *For without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*, or to walk with, or to come unto him, as *Enoch* did. *For he that cometh unto God, muſt*, in the very nature of the thing, *believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.* [Obſerve — *pleaſing God, coming unto God, and diligently ſeeking him*, are ſynonymous, and all included in the ſenſe of *walking with God.*] By faith *Enoch* lead a very religious and heavenly life. His thoughts and affections were removed from things below, and fixed upon things above. He had a deep ſenſe of God and his perfections, delighted in his ways, behaved as always in his ſight, and conſtantly ſtudied to pleaſe him, and promote his glory. Being of a character ſo excellent, and withal a perſon of eminent note, and great induſtry in oppoſing the growing wickedneſs of the world, God was pleaſed to reward his piety, and give the reſt of mankind a demonſtration of a future ſtate of glory, the inheritance of the holy and virtuous, by tranſlating him alive, without ſeeing death, into heaven. It is not improbable, that he was tranſlated in ſome viſible manner as *Elijah* was afterwards, by a glorious appearance of the *Shechinah*, from whence ſome heavenly miniſters might be detached to convey him to a better world.

world. This happened 57 years after *Adam*'s death, in the year of the world 987, and 669 years before the deluge.

Ver. 29. *And Lamech called his ſon's name Noah,* [reſt or refreſhment, from נוח to reſt, to take repoſe,] *ſaying, This ſame ſhall comfort us concerning our work, and toil of our hands, becauſe of the ground, which the Lord hath curſed.* *Lamech* might give his ſon this name when he found he had an extraordinary genius for agriculture, and was likely by his uſeful inventions, to diminiſh the very great toil, which had hitherto attended the tillage of the earth. See chap. ix. 20, 21.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of the DELUGE.

Gen. Chapters VI. and VII.

GEN. iv. 26.—*then it was begun to call by the name of the Lord;* Or then, in the days of *Enos*, the family of *Seth*, which adhered to God and his worſhip, began to give themſelves a denomination expreſſive of their relation and regards to God; that is to ſay, to aſſume the title of *the Sons*, or Children *of God*, as in chap. vi. 2. in order to diſtinguiſh and ſeparate themſelves from the irreligious family of *Cain*. Which title was alſo uſed after the flood. *Job* i. 6. ii. 1.

But (chap. vi. 1. which is in connection with chap. iv. 26, the intermediate chapter being a genealogical parentheſis) [*But when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,* &c.] The families of *Seth* and *Cain*, increaſing and ſpreading upon the earth, at length met and unhappily mixed together. For the ſons of God, by the inſtigation of ſenſual appetite, without regard to reaſon or religion, joined themſelves in affinity to *Cain*'s impious poſterity, by marrying their beautiful women. The conſequence of which was, that they were ſoon corrupted by the prophane converſation of their new relations. The virtuous and godly in marrying both themſelves, and children, ſhould be careful to keep within the limits of religion. A wife is the foundation of many other relations, and commonly has a great influence upon a man and his family. But it is a relation we can chuſe for ourſelves. And in a caſe of ſo great importance, we ſhould neither follow the luſt of covetouſneſs, nor of carnal deſires, but the rules of religion, and the fear of God.

Thus, notwithſtanding the Divine Manifeſtations, and the preaching of *Enoch* and *Noah*, and, probably, of other good men, the contagion of wickedneſs by degrees infected the whole earth, and turned it into a

ſcene

ſcene of impiety, lewdneſs, and injuſtice. The iſſue, of the aforeſaid diſorderly marriages, joined the worſt part; and growing up without any ſenſe of religion and virtue, became wholly ingaged in ſenſual ambitious purſuits, and joining, or imitating a lewd and impious race of giants, which were then in the earth, they affected to be men of renown for great and valorous exploits, by all methods of oppreſſion and violence, ſubjecting all others to their wills and luſts; and every where extinguiſhing a ſenſe of God, both by their wicked, *ungodly deeds*, and *their hard*, contumacious, blaſphemous *ſpeeches* againſt him, and his holy laws, (*Jude* 15.) deſpiſing his goodneſs, and diſdaining the reſtraints of his government; till *all the earth was corrupt before God, and filled with violence*, ver. 13. *every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts* being *only evil continually*, ver. 5; which cut off all hopes of their amendment, their minds being wholly intent upon gratifying their ambition and luſt.

In relation to this ſad condition of the world, the firſt thing that God declared, probably, from the *Shechinah* in the thin aſſembly of his worſhippers, was this, (ver. 3.) *My Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with man*, &c. This is the ſpirit (1 Pet. iii. 19, 20.) *by which* our Lord *went and preached* [not in perſon, but by ſuch preachers as *Enoch* and *Noah*, 2 Pet. ii. 5.] *unto the ſpirits* [which are now, i. e. at the time of the Apoſtle's writing] *in priſon*, [confined in the ſtate of the dead, and reſerved in ſafe cuſtody to the day of judgment,] *which ſometimes were diſobedient in the days of Noah, while the ark was in preparing. My Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive*, or debate, *with man*, for his reformation, בְּשַׁגַּם הוּא בָשָׂר eo quod profecto ille caro, *ſeeing that really he is* [nothing but] *fleſh*, altogether fleſhly, void of all virtuous principles, and therefore uncapable of being reformed by any means proper to be applied to a rational nature. Violence, or coaction cannot make him good, and he will not attend to any methods of perſuaſion. But where the reformation of moral agents cannot be effected, it is fit and reaſonable that they ſhould be deſtroyed; for it is to no purpoſe to continue in being a race of creatures, who live in direct oppoſition to the perfections of God, and all the wiſe and good ends of their creation; and who therefore might as well never have been made at all; becauſe rendered utterly incapable of honouring God their Maker, of injoying themſelves, or being uſeful to others. It muſt be inconſiſtent with the Divine Perfections, and all the good and wiſe ends of his government, to make that life the object of his providential care and liberality, which is thus miſerably perverted. On the contrary, ſuch are the nuiſance, corruption, diſorder, and plague of the creation; and for that reaſon it is agreable, not only to juſtice, but to goodneſs, and beneficence that ſuch ſhould be removed out of the creation. Hence it is, that God ſpeaking עַל־ דִּבְּרוֹת בְּנֵי אָדָם after the manner of men, is ſaid *to repent, and to be grieved, that* he *had made man on the earth*, and was reſolved to deſtroy them. Ver. 6, 7.

Corollary. I. Religion and virtue are the ſoul and ſupport of the univerſe; which being totally taken away, no reaſon can be given why any worlds or agents ſhould exiſt.

Corollary II.

Corollary II. The holy Scriptures, which aſſure us the wages of ſin is death, and conſtantly affirm, that the impenitent workers of iniquity ſhall be deſtroyed, do give us infallibly a juſt and true account of things, which demands the whole attention of our minds.

It was determined, becauſe it was fit, that the world ſo vicious ſhould be deſtroyed. And the great God might deſtroy them in what way he ſhould judge moſt proper, without any injuſtice on his part, or on the part of any agents which he might employ. He might have deſtroyed them by fire from heaven, as *Sodom*, &c. Or by peſtilence, or by deſtroying angels, 1 *Chron.* xxi. 12, 27. 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 21. Or he might have given a commiſſion to any one more righteous nation among them, had there been any ſuch, to deſtroy all the reſt by the ſword, and a right to enter upon all their poſſeſſions, as in the caſe of the wicked *Canaanites*, *Deut.* vii. 2. ix. 5. *Lev.* xviii. 26, &c. For the property of life, and of all poſſeſſions, belongs originally and abſolutely to God alone. But he choſe to deſtroy them by a deluge, or general inundation.

Not that the Divine Wiſdom intended to extirpate the human race; the deſign was not to extirpate, but to reform; and therefore the Lord was graciouſly pleaſed to reſpite the judgment, the impious world had deſerved, for 120 years, ver. 3. This was to ſhew that he had no pleaſure in their deſtruction, and to give them ſpace for repentance, that their ruin, if poſſible, might be prevented. Thus *the long-ſuffering of God waited* for the converſion of the *diſobedient in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing*, 1 Pet. iii. 20. *Noah* was an excellent perſon, *a juſt man and perfect*, who, like *Enoch*, *walked with God*, ver. 9. Him and his family God was pleaſed graciouſly to preſerve; that from ſo good a ſtock the human race might be again propagated, and religion reſtored in the world. With him God purpoſed to *eſtabliſh his covenant*, or grant of bleſſings, ver. 18. The grace of God to mankind, eſpecially the grand ſcheme of redemption, was not to fail, or to be ſuſpended; therefore the Lord directed *Noah* to build a veſſel in ſhape like a large cheſt, every way convenient for floting upon the waters, and for containing all the creatures, which it was to receive, verſe 30. * [See Pierce on *Heb.* xi. 7.] *Noah* without delay expreſſed his humble and entire faith in the Divine Warning; and in obedience to it, applied himſelf to the building of the ark, for the ſaving of himſelf and family, (*Heb.* xi. 7.) *by the which he condemned* the unbelieving and impenitent *world, and became heir of the righteouſneſs*, [or became intitled to the ſalvation] *which is by faith.*

Note—*Noah* is commonly, and I think, juſtly ſuppoſed to have been 120 years in building the ark, for that was the time *the long-ſuffering* of God waited; which time of long-ſuffering was, *while the ark was in preparing*, as in 1 Pet. iii. 20. At the begining of this time, *Noah*'s three ſons, *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*, were not born; for *Noah* was now but 480 years old, and none of his foreſaid ſons were born till he was 500.

	Cubits.	Feet.	Yards.
* *The length of the ark*	300 equal to	450 equal to	150 at leaſt.
The breadth	— 50	75	25.
The height	— 30	45	15.

500. chap. v. 32. And therefore that paragraph, ver. 17, &c. wherein mention is made of *Noah*'s ſons, *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*, and their wives, muſt have been ſpoken after the ark was finiſhed.

When the ark was finiſhed, and *Noah* and his family, the animals and their food, ſafe lodged in it, about the 6th of November, in the year of the world 1656, by the mighty power of God, *the fountains of the great deeps were broken up*, chap. vii. 11. the ſea overflowed, being prodigiouſly raiſed by the violent eruption of the ſubterraneous waters; and rain came down from the ſkie, not in drops, but in ſtreams and ſpouts, *the windows of heaven were opened*; and both together eaſily prevailed over the earth, and put it out of the power of the wiſeſt and ſtrongeſt of men to relieve either themſelves or their friends.

And now, how were the careleſs and impenitent unbelievers ſurprized! Conceive them ſecurely going on in the uſual way of life, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, *Mat.* xxiv. 37; feaſting and reveling, thinking of nothing but ſenſual enjoyments, in contempt of every ſerious admonition. When all on a ſudden the moſt terrible rains and inundations threatened their inevitable deſtruction. How would they be terrified! How would they condemn their own unbelief, and be forced to own there was a juſt and righteous God, who will execute vengeance on all the incurable workers of iniquity! This is a ſpecimen of the final deſtruction of the ungodly at the laſt day, which God hath revealed. Let us not harden our hearts, but believe and prepare.

Chap. vi. 17. *And behold I, even I,* by my own immediate operation, *do bring* הַמַּבּוּל *a flood of waters upon the earth, to deſtroy all fleſh.* The word מַבּוּל in its primary ſenſe, doth not include the idea of a flood; it comes from נבל which, with relation to plants and animals, originally ſignifies, to be ſo exhauſted of natural moiſture and ſpirits, in which their life conſiſts, as to be withered, or dead. And it is applied peculiarly to the deluge, and to nothing but that, under the notion of extinction of life; and ſo the phraſe הַמַּבּוּל מָיִם may be tranſlated, *an extinction of life by waters.* It is only uſed in *Gen.* chapters the 6th, 7th, 9th, 10th; and in *Pſal.* xxix. 10. *The Lord ſiteth* [יָשַׁב ſat, or did ſit] *upon*, or at, *the flood*, the extinction of life at the deluge. He then ſat upon the ſeat of judgment executing vengeance upon that wicked generation; *yea, the Lord ſiteth King for ever.* AINSWORTH upon *Pſal.* xxix. 10.

This diſpenſation, as all the reſt, had relation to the morals of mankind: and the evident deſign of it was to leſſen the quantity of vice and profaneneſs, and to preſerve and advance religion and virtue in the earth, the great end for which the earth, and man in it, were created. This end it was well adapted to obtain in the then preſent ſtate of things, and in all future generations. In the preſent ſtate of things, it prevented a total corruption. For if the whole tainted part had not been cut off, a ſingle family would ſoon have been drawn in, or deſtroyed; and then the whole globe muſt have been ruined, and the ſchemes and purpoſes of God from the begining of the world, had been defeated. But by reſerving a ſelect family

family for the continuation of the human ſpecies, the ſyſtem of the Divine Counſels was preſerved intire, and the moſt proper method was deviſed for the eſtabliſhment of religion and virtue in the new world; as the family of *Noah* enjoyed much greater advantages for this end, than the family of *Adam* at the begining of things.

Noah was not, like *Adam*, a new, unexperienced being, ignorant of every thing, but what he received from revelation. *Noah*, beſides the benefit of revelation, and intercourſe with heaven, had the whole compaſs of ancient antediluvian knowledge from the creation, in his own poſſeſſion. He was a man of the moſt eminent abilities, and the moſt ſteady integrity. *Adam* was eaſily ſeduced; but in the midſt of an univerſal degeneracy, *Noah* firmly adhered to truth and religion; and when he was warned of God to prepare the ark, even 120 years before the deluge, or any appearances of it, ſo ſtrong was his faith, or perſuaſion of the Divine Power, Juſtice, and Veracity, that he applied himſelf to the work, and compleated it, ſurrounded as he was with the infidelity and contempt of all the world. A man of ſo much underſtanding, and of ſuch a ſpirit, would not fail to communicate all he knew to his poſterity, nor to inculcate it ſtrongly upon their hearts.

But his family, *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*, with their wives, were eye-witneſſes of the dreadful inundation, and had the moſt affecting proof of their own deliverance. They reſided full twelve months in the ark, from the begining of the deluge, to the end of it. And it is eaſy to conceive how they would be affected in ſuch a moving ſituation. They knew this ſhocking cataſtrophe was not an unfortunate accident, but occaſioned by the wickedneſs of the world; therefore all the terrors of the deluge muſt give them the moſt ſenſible perception of the malignant nature of wickedneſs, that it is infinitely odious to God, and dreadfully pernicious to ſinners. They muſt be convinced of the uncontrolable power and dominion of the Moſt High, the impoſſibility of eſcaping his vengeance, what a fearful thing it is to fall into his hands, and how much they were obliged, both in intereſt and duty, to reverence and obey him.

On the other hand, their preſervation from ſo terrible a calamity, in the midſt of the ruins of all the world beſides, muſt be a very ſtriking demonſtration of God's favor and compaſſion to themſelves; which was naturally adapted to make the deepeſt impreſſions of gratitude, love, and duty. Eſpecially as they could not but be ſenſible, that ſuch a great and miraculous deliverance was particularly owing to the eminent piety of their father, *Gen.* vii. 1. Thus they would be well prepared and diſpoſed to acknowledge and admit the excellency of thoſe principles and practices which had been, through Divine Goodneſs, their ſecurity in the general deſolation.

And when they left the ark, all the diſmal appearances of the deſolate world, the ruins of palaces, towns, and cities, the ſadly changed face of countries, which they had ſeen in a cultivated, flouriſhing ſtate, the bones of men and other animals, ſtrewed over all the face of the earth, would have a natural tendency to fix upon their minds the good impreſſions they had received in the ark, and render them ſolicitous to inculcate the principles of religion upon their children. Add to all

this,

this, that *Noah*, who lived 349 years after the flood, and whoſe pious admonitions would be of much greater weight and authority, than when he was an unſucceſsful preacher of righteouſneſs to the antediluvians, was the inſtructor, and, for ſome time at leaſt, the governor of the new world.

From all this it will appear, that this was a very juſt and proper diſpenſation for reforming mankind, and reſtoring religion in the earth; well adapted to that thoughtleſs age, (when they ſeem not to have attained to any conſiderable degree of reaſoning, and therefore not diſpoſed to be wrought upon by argument) and to the ſtate of things in it, when no regular civil governments and laws were formed for the adminiſtration of juſtice, and the reſtraint of injury and wrong. And it appears to have had the intended effect, by ſuppreſſing violence and rapine, which never any more univerſally prevailed in the world; and by fixing a ſenſe of religion upon the minds of men, which afterwards was indeed perverted, but not quite extinguiſhed. And as it ſtands recorded in ſacred writ, it is a warning to the remoteſt generations. In which view it is refered to 2 *Pet.* ii. 5. *And* [God] *ſpared not the old world, but ſaved Noah, the eighth perſon, a preacher of righteouſneſs, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into aſhes — making them an example unto thoſe that afterwards ſhould live ungodly.*

CHAP. XIX.

Of Noah's *Sacrifice, and the Divine Intercourſe on that Occaſion.*

Gen. viii. to the End of the ix. Chapter.

NOAH, being reſtored to the poſſeſſion of the earth, entered upon it with a ſolemn act of Divine Worſhip, according to the original inſtitution, *Gen.* viii. 20. *He builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beaſt, and of every clean fowl,* i. e. of ſuch beaſts and fowls as God hath ordained for Sacrifices, *and offered Burnt-Offerings upon the Altar.* Which as they were intended to denote, ſo they were in *Noah* accompanied with, faith in the mercy of God, thankfulneſs for the late miraculous deliverance, and the dedication of himſelf, and of all his, to the honor and obedience of God, through the promiſed Redeemer; of whom *Noah* and the Patriarchs, we may well ſuppoſe, had a general knowledge and expectation. The Acceptableneſs of this act of devotion to God, is ſignified by his *ſmelling a ſweet ſavour,* רֵיחַ הַנִּיחֹחַ ver. 21. This one may call *Hieroglyphic* language. *Hieroglyphics,* which by bodily ſenſations, or external repreſentations, denoted abſtract

abſtract notions, or the ſentiments of the mind, were the literature of the firſt ages of the world. So here, the approbation of the judgment, or what is pleaſing to the mind, is ſignified by an odor or fragrance grateful to the ſmell. Or the taſte and reliſh of the body is transferred to the taſte and reliſh of the mind. This language is frequently uſed in the Levitical law. As in *Lev.* i. 9, 13, 17. ii. 2, 9. iii. 5, *&c.* meaning the acceptableneſs of the Sacrifice or Offering. So the fragrance of burnt-incenſe repreſents the acceptableneſs of ſincere prayer, *Pſal.* cxli. 2. *Luke* i. 10. *Rev.* viii. 3, 4.

It is alſo applied, in the ſame ſenſe, to the offering and ſacrifice of our Lord, *Epheſ.* v. 2. *And walk in love, as Chriſt alſo hath loved us, and hath given himſelf for us, an Offering and Sacrifice to God for a ſweet ſmelling ſavour.* God, who is a ſpirit, can reliſh, or be pleaſed with, only that which is morally, or ſpiritually good, the love and obedience of the heart. This is the only ſavour that is grateful to him. And therefore, the Sacrifice of our Lord muſt have been an actual exhibition of obedience and love; and the Sacrifices of *Noah*, and of the *Iſraelites*, muſt have been hieroglyphic repreſentations of, or inſtructions in, the like moral diſpoſitions, in order to expreſs, or produce them in the hearts of the worſhippers. *Smelling a ſweet ſavour* is plainly hieroglyphic, or figurative language; and therefore the Sacrifice, or Offering, the object of ſuch ſmelling, muſt alſo be figurative, repreſenting thoſe good diſpoſitions, which were, or ought to have been, in the worſhiper's heart, and which were in the higheſt and moſt perfect degree in our Lord. The Sacrifice of a clean beaſt or fowl figuratively repreſented what the worſhiper was, or ought to be and do; and our Lord really was, and perfectly did what the Sacrifice repreſented. Hence *Sacrifice* is applied to beneficent actions, or actions morally good, and pleaſing to God, *Pſal.* iv. 5. l. 14, 23. *Phil.* iv. 18. *Heb.* xiii. 15, 16. And in *the Book of Wiſdom* is applied to the whole of a virtuous life, *as gold in the furnace hath he tried them,* [afflicted good men,] *and received them as a Burnt-Offering.*

The ſmell, or ſavour, of a perſon, or thing, is the quality of it, good or evil, which occaſions the approbation or diſlike of thoſe that paſs a judgment upon it. *Exod.* v. 21. *You have made* רֵיחֵנוּ *our ſavour,* that in us which is the object of *Pharaoh*'s judgment, *to be abhorred,* to ſtink, *in the eyes,* the opinion, *of Pharaoh.* So *Gen.* xxxiv. 30. *Jer.* xlviii. 11. *Moab hath been at eaſe from his youth, and he hath ſettled on his lees, —therefore his taſte,* טַעְמוֹ his reliſh *remaineth in him, and his ſcent,* רֵיחוֹ his ſavour, his bad qualities, *is not changed.* 2 Cor. ii. 14, 15, 16. *Now thanks be unto God, who always cauſeth us to triumph in Chriſt, and maketh manifeſt,* diſplays, *the ſavour,* τὴν ὀσμὴν the excellent qualities, *of his knowledge,* the knowledge of Chriſt, *by us in every place. For we are to God,* εὐωδία, *the ſweet ſmelling ſavour of Chriſt,* [*i. e.* my miniſtry is to God a Sacrifice of a ſweet ſmelling ſavour, which I offer unto him on the behalf of *Chriſt.* See *Rom.* xv. 16.] *both in regard of them that are ſaved, and alſo of them that periſh.* [For in both caſes the counſels and ſchemes of Divine Wiſdom are accompliſhed.] Though *to the one we are,* ὀσμὴ, *the ſavour of death unto death; and to the other we are the ſavour*

of

of life unto life. [*i. e.* to the minds of the one my preaching is offenſive; and rejecting it, they are advancing towards eternal death; to the minds of the other it is grateful and pleaſing; and embracing it they are advancing towards life eternal.] *And who is ſufficient for theſe things* of ſo great conſequence? Note—*A ſavour of death unto death*, is a ſavour which occaſions their advancing towards eternal death.

Upon the ſolemn occaſion of *Noah*'s Sacrifice, *the Lord ſaid in his heart*, i. e. determined, or reſolved, that he would *not again curſe the ground any more for man's ſake*; (chap. viii. 21.) *for* [כִּי though] *the imagination of man's heart is* [ſhould be] *evil from his youth. From his youth*, denotes a corruption of manners of long continuance. See *Iſai.* xlvii. 12, 15. *Jer.* iii. 25. *Ezek.* xxiii. 8. See alſo *Job* xxxi. 18. The Lord was alſo pleaſed to repeat to *Noah* and his ſons the ſame bleſſing upon the propagation of the human ſpecies, and the ſame marks of diſtinction upon our nature, as he had given *Adam* at his creation, with an additional grant of animal food, (*chap.* ix. 3, 4.) with this reſtriction, that they ſhould not *eat the fleſh* of an animal *in the life thereof, the blood thereof*; or that they ſhould not eat any fleſh cut off from any animal while it is alive. At the ſame time God made a covenant with *Noah*, and with every living creature, or he made a free and abſolute grant, or promiſe to them, that *all fleſh* ſhould *not any more be cut off with the waters of a flood.* Of which more hereafter.

What is here particularly to be obſerved is, the inſtitution of magiſtracy, and the puniſhment of murder. ver. 6. *Whoſo ſheds man's blood, by man ſhall his blood be ſhed.* ver. 5. *And ſurely your blood of your lives will I require, at the hand of every beaſt will I require it; and at the hand of man, at the hand of every man's brother, will I require the life of man.* The beaſt that killed, or the man that murdered a man, is here commanded to be put to death *by man*, i. e. by the magiſtrate, or judge. Here courts of judicature are authorized, not only for the puniſhment of murder, but, by parity of reaſon, of any other great offences, which may affect life nearly as much as murder.

This ſeems to be the original inſtitution of magiſtracy, of which we have not hitherto the leaſt intimation in the ſacred hiſtory. On the contrary, it appears from the caſe of *Cain*, (Gen. iv. 15.) and of *Lamech*, (Gen. iv. 23, 24.) that murder, the greateſt of crimes, was left to be puniſhed, as God in his providence ſhould ſee fit. And if murder, much more every leſſer inſtance of injury. It ſeems probable, there were no ſeparate ſtates, nor regular governments, among the antediluvians; but that as they ſpread over the face of the earth, they removed further from the place of public worſhip, loſt a ſenſe of God, and lived in a diſorderly manner, exerciſing violence and outrage, as they had power; and were inſtigated by luſt, avarice and revenge, till the earth was filled with violence. Which, I apprehend, could not have been the caſe, under laws and governors, armed with power to reſtrain outrage and injuſtice. For though governors themſelves, and their creatures, may be tyrannical and oppreſſive, yet, for their own ſecurity, they will not ſuffer their ſubjects to break out into anarchy and licentious invaſion of life and property, becauſe this is open rebellion againſt governors. The ſtate of

the old world, probably, was like that of the *Iſraelites*, when there was *no king*, no magiſtrate, among them, *but every man did that which was right in his own eyes*, Jud. xxi. 25. Which proves the poſſibility of ſuch a licentious ſtate, and the ſhocking diſorders that would attend it.

The leaving mankind, in the firſt ages of the world, in this looſe and diſcretionary ſtate, certainly, was not to lead them into wickedneſs; but, I conceive, to teach them by experience the neceſſity of laws and governors, and the reaſonableneſs of ſubmiting to them. [See Chap. III. §. IV. the Corollary.] For even upon the contrary ſuppoſition, that magiſtracy, in ſome form or other, was inſtituted from the begining of the world, yet it is plain, that mankind in thoſe ages would not bear the yoke, but univerſally ſhook it off. Nor could government, in fact, be permanently eſtabliſhed, till the ruin of the world demonſtrated the neceſſity of it. Therefore, if God did not ſee fit to eſtabliſh magiſtracy from the begining, it was becauſe he knew mankind would not bear the reſtraints of government with a rational conſent and approbation; (without which conſent and approbation, at leaſt from the majority, government could not have been either erected or ſupported) till ſad experience had taught them the utility and importance of it. Thus a particular ſpecies of injuſtice, and even of murder, is permited under our preſent diſpenſation, and, inſtead of being reſtrained, is eſtabliſhed by law; I mean perſecution, or the taking away of life for difference of ſentiments in religion, which ſubſiſts in moſt Chriſtian countries. And this, I apprehend, the wiſdom of God has permitted, that Chriſtians at length may be rationally convinced of the monſtrous iniquity of ſuch practice, and ſo be generally induced by the ſenſe of their own minds to approve and chooſe goodneſs, love, and mutual forbearance; which we hope will be the genius and happy temper of the next enſuing diſpenſation. This is the only method of moral improvement, namely, when the mind, by proper methods, is led to apprehend, and freely imbrace, what is right and fit; and I doubt not, takes place in the gradual advances of all, or of any part of mankind in wiſdom, as well as of particular ſingle perſons. This, with what hath been ſaid before, is the beſt account I can give of this antediluvian diſpenſation.

N. B. The curſe upon *Canaan*, ver. 25. is to be underſtood as affecting only the temporal circumſtances of his poſterity, *a ſervant of ſervants ſhall he be.* As in *Deut.* xxviii. 16, 17, *&c. Curſed ſhall be thy baſket and thy ſtore.* Nor is it to be conſidered in *Noah* as a malevolent wiſh, or imprecation, but ſimply as a prediction of the future ſtate of *Ham*'s poſterity; as appears from the whole of *Noah*'s diſcourſe, which is plainly prophetic.

CHAP. XX.

CHAP. XX.

Of the DISPERSION *at the Tower of* BABEL.

Gen. x.

HERE *Moſes* gives an account how the earth was peopled by the ſeveral families, or Deſcendents of *Noah*'s three ſons, *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*, *ver.* 32. For the particulars of this curious account conſult the Commentators, eſpecially Bp. PATRICK. What I would obſerve is this —— That after the account of the ſeveral nations deſcended from each of *Noah*'s ſons it is added, as in *ver.* 5. *By theſe* deſcendents of *Japhet*, *were the iſles*, or tranſmarine countries, *of the Gentiles divided in their* ſeveral *lands*; *every one after his tongue*, or language, *after their families*, *in their nations*. The ſame is ſaid *ver.* 20, 31. of the poſterity of *Ham* and *Shem*. Which plainly ſignifies, that they did not all ſpeak the ſame language; but that the deſcendents from *Noah*'s ſons, at leaſt in general, if not ſeveral of the particular nations, had a language peculiar to themſelves, diſtinct from the reſt, and unintelligible to them. *Noah* and his poſterity, while they lived together after the flood, which muſt be for ſome conſiderable time, could have but one and the ſame language amongſt them. How they came to have different languages, and how they were ſeparated into ſeveral diſtant countries, by a very memorable event, *Moſes* relates in the next chapter.

When *Noah*'s family was numerous enough, probably the Lord, by the mouth of *Noah*, commanded them to ſeparate into different countries, particularly ſpecified, that the earth might be better cultivated and governed. Certainly their diviſion and removal into *diſtant* countries (*Gen.* x. 5.) muſt have been a general public act. And, as *Moſes* ſaith, the earth was divided into nations in *Peleg*'s days, (*ver.* 25, 32.) it ſeems to imply, that it was done by a divine command, and not accidentally, as any might chooſe a more convenient ſituation. Which is more clearly expreſt, *Deut.* xxxii. 8. where it is ſaid, *when the moſt High divided to the nations their inheritance*, *when he ſeparated the ſons of Adam*, [refering to this diviſion of the earth] *he ſet the bounds of the people*, the adjacent nations, *according to the number of the future children of Iſrael*, leaving for them a convenient ſituation, and room ſufficient. In proſecution of this deſign, the whole earth, except, perhaps, the elder Patriarchs, and their attendants, journying from the mother-colony towards the weſt, and finding a ſpacious fruitful vale in the land of *Shinar*, there they determined to ſettle, and build a city and a tower, *reaching up to heaven*, or of a very great height. *Deut.* i. 28. ix. 1. *Pſal.* cvii. 25, 26. [An hyperbole.]

Their intention was to *make* themſelves *a name*, and to prevent their being *ſcattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth*, (ver. 4.) as God had probably ordered they ſhould. The ſcheme was to keep together, and

very likely under one head. *Schultens*, upon *Job* i. 1. derives שֵׁם *a name*, from the Arabic verb שמה or שמא to be high, elevated, eminent. And according to him, the primary and proper notion of שֵׁם is a mark or ſign, ſtanding out, riſing up, or expoſed to open view; a ſtanding mark or title of diſtinction and eminence. 2 *Sam.* vii. 23.——*and to make him a name*, a monument of honor and eminence. *chap.* viii. 13. 1 *Kin.* v. 3, 5.——*build an houſe unto*, or for, *the name*, honor, eminent diſtinction, *of the Lord*, to denote, that he is the only true God, and King of the *Iſraelites*. 1 *Kings* viii. 16, 29. 1 *Chron.* xvii. 21.——*to make thee a name*, a monument, *of greatneſs and terribleneſs*. Iſai. xviii. 7. lv. 13.——*it ſhall be to the Lord for a name*, i. e. *for an everlaſting ſign, that ſhall not be cut off.* chap. lxiii. 12, 14. So in this place, *Gen.* xi. 4.—*and let us*, ſay the heads or leaders, *make us a name*, a monument or token of ſuperiority and eminence, I conceive, to ſignify to all ſucceeding generations, that they were the true original governors, to whom all mankind ought to be in ſubjection; leſt other leaders ſtarting up ſhould carry off parties, and ſo break the body, and ſet up ſeparate Governments. It ſeems to have been a piece of ſtate-policy, to keep all mankind together, under the preſent chiefs and their ſucceſſors. And the lofty Tower was probably intended to command every part of the town, and keep off any body of men, that ſhould attempt to break in upon them.

But God, whoſe wiſdom perfectly foreſaw the miſchievous effects of ſuch an attempt, determined to fruſtrate and defeat it. By this ſcheme a great part of the earth muſt for a long time have been uninhabited, uncultivated, and over-run with beggary, and wild beaſts; which, as it was, for a long time, according to ancient authors, exerciſed the induſtry and valor of the primitive heroes in hunting and ſubduing them. It was thus *Nimrod*, that mighty hunter, gained his renown. *Gen.* x. 9. *He was a mighty hunter before the Lord.* Which is an Hebrew phraſe, to ſignify the greateſt, and moſt eminent thing of any kind. *Acts* vii. 20. Αστιος τω θεω, *exceeding fair*; 2 Cor. viii. 1. Την χαριν του θεου, *the very great liberality beſtowed by the churches of Macedonia.* chap. x. 4. Δυνατα τω θεω, *exceeding powerful.* Pſalm. lxxx. 10, 11. אַרְזֵי אֵל the cedars of God, *the goodly cedars.*

Moſt probably the bad effects, which this project would have had upon the minds, the morals, and religion of mankind, was the chief reaſon why God interpoſed to cruſh it as ſoon as it was formed. It manifeſtly had a direct tendency to tyranny, oppreſſion, and ſlavery. Whereas in forming ſeveral independent governments by a ſmall body of men, the ends of government, and the ſecurity of liberty and property, would be much better attended to, and more firmly eſtabliſhed; which, in fact, was generally the caſe, if we may judge of the reſt, by the conſtitution of one of the moſt eminent, the kingdom of *Egypt*. Gen. xlvii. 15—27. The *Egyptians* were maſters of their perſons and properties, till they ſold them to *Pharaoh* for bread. And then their ſervitude amounted to no more, than the fifth part of the produce of the country, as an annual tax payable to the king; which is not near ſo much as we, with all our Engliſh liberties, pay yearly to the church and government.

Corruption

Corruption may creep into religion under any conſtitution, but tyranny and deſpotic power is the readieſt and ſureſt way to deprive men of the uſe of underſtanding and conſcience; and vice and idolatry would have ſpread much faſter, had the whole world, in one body, been under the abſolute dominion of vicious, inſolent, idolatrous monarchs. This would have been a ſtate of things juſt in the oppoſite extreme to the antediluvian licentiouſneſs, and would have been nearly as pernicious to virtue; as it muſt have ſunk mankind into the baſeſt ſervility of mind, and have ſtockt the earth with a mean ſpirited race of mortals, who durſt not open their own eyes, make any generous uſe of their own faculties, or reliſh the bounty of heaven with pleaſure and thankfulneſs. Ημισυ γαρ τ' αρετης αποαινυται ουλιον ημαρ, ſaith *Homer* (Odyſs. p. ver. 322.) —— *Whatever day makes a man a ſlave, takes half his worth away.* "Thus "I have heard, ſaith *Longinus*, Sect. XLIV. if what I have heard in this "caſe deſerve credit, that the caſes in which dwarfs are kept, not only "prevent the future growth of thoſe who are incloſed in them, but alſo "diminiſh what bulk they already have, by too cloſe conſtriction of "their parts. So ſlavery, be it never ſo eaſy, yet is ſlavery ſtill; and "may deſervedly be called, the priſon of the ſoul, and the public "dungeon."

For theſe wiſe and beneficent reaſons, I preſume, the Divine Providence interpoſed, and baffled the project; which in the then circumſtances of the projectors, would otherwiſe have been unhappily ſucceſsful, by confounding, and altering their language in ſuch manner, as that they could not underſtand one another; and ſo were obliged to deſiſt from the work they had begun, to ſeparate into many ſmaller bodies, and to ſeek for ſettlements at a diſtance from each other, as the ſeveral companies, by the ſameneſs of ſpeech, were capable of converſing together, and poſſibly in the very countries which God had marked out for them.

Thus the contagion of wickedneſs, for ſome time at leaſt, had bounds ſet to it; evil example was confined, and could not ſtretch its influence beyond the limits of one country; nor could wicked projects be carried on with univerſal concurrence by many little colonies, ſeparated by the natural boundaries of mountains, rivers, deſerts, ſeas, and hindered from aſſociating together by a variety of languages unintelligible to each other. And further, in this diſperſed ſtate, they would, whenever God pleaſed, be made checks reciprocally upon each other by invaſions and wars; which would weaken the power, and humble the pride of corrupt and vicious communities. This diſpenſation, therefore, was properly calculated to prevent a ſecond univerſal degeneracy. God therein dealing with men as rational agents, and ſuiting his ſcheme to their preſent ſtate and circumſtances. This Diſperſion probably happened about 240 years of the flood.

CHAP. XXI.

Of the סוד COUNCIL *of* GOD; *or a Criticiſm upon thoſe Words,* Let us go down, *Gen.* xi. 7.

ALL allow, that the *Lord's coming down to ſee the City, and Tower,* Gen. xi. 5, is to be underſtood ανθρωποπαθως by way of accommodation to our conceptions; and means no more, but that by the effects, he made it appear, that he obſerved their motions, and knew their intentions. This is a very common, and in our preſent embodied ſtate, a very proper way of repreſenting the actions of Deity. But when *Jehovah* is repreſented as ſaying, *Go to, let us go down,* verſe 7, as before, chap. i. 26, he had ſaid, *Let us make man,* &c. learned men have ſuppoſed, that this is to be taken literally, and that God here ſpake to ſome beings included in his own nature and ſubſtance. Whereas this alſo is a figure of ſpeech, which is to be underſtood as the foregoing. Kings tranſact their moſt important affairs in a ſolemn council. Hence God is pleaſed to repreſent himſelf as having likewiſe his סוד or privy council. And the determinations of his Providence are deſcribed, after the manner of men, as having been made in that Council, in order to expreſs the wiſdom, importance, and certainty of them. Thus, and for this purpoſe, *Jehovah* is here, and in *Gen.* i. 26, repreſented as ſpeaking in his Council, *Let us make man, let us go down, and there confound their language.*

OF this Council, I apprehend, *Job* ſpeaks, chap. xxix. 4. —— *when the ſecret* Council בְּסוֹד *of God was upon my tabernacle*; when the auguſt Aſſembly, where God's Counſels and Decrees are paſſed, was held, as it were over my habitation; and it ſeemed to be his peculiar care to proſper me and my family. To this Council the Prophets in viſion are ſuppoſed to be admitted as ſtanders-by, and hearers of what is there decreed, and reſolved upon. *Job* xv. 8. וְתִשְׁמַע בְּסוֹד אֱלוֹהַּ *haſt thou heard,* or been a hearer, *in the ſecret* Council *of God.* Jer. xxiii. 17, 18. *They,* the falſe prophets, *ſay ſtill unto them that deſpiſe me, the Lord hath ſaid, Ye ſhall have peace; and they ſay unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil ſhall come unto you.* כִּי מִי עָמַד בְּסוֹד יְהוָה *For who hath ſtood* [as a waiter, or ſervant, ready to carry God's meſſages to his people. So לִפְנֵי מֶלֶךְ עָמַד one that ſtands before the King, is properly the King's Miniſter. And when *Eliſha* ſaith, (2 *Kings* iii. 14.) *as the Lord liveth before whom I ſtand,* he means, *whoſe Miniſter I am.*] *in the ſecret Council,* or Aſſembly, *of Jehovah, and hath ſeen and heard his word?* q. d. Which of you hath been wrapt in viſion, and admited as a ſtander-by and hearer in that great Aſſembly, where God's Councils are held, and hath brought a meſſage to his people from thence? No, you go preſumptuouſly with meſſages of your own heads. Verſe 21. *I have not*

not ſent theſe Prophets, yet they ran: I have not ſpoken to them, yet they prophe-
ſied. וְאִם עָמְדוּ בְסוֹדִי *But if they had ſtood in my Council, and had cauſed my people to hear my words, then they ſhould have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.* This connection of the Prophets with the Council of God may ſerve to explain *Jonah*'s fleeing *from the preſence of*, or from before, *the Lord*, *Jon.* i. 2. He was ſent upon a frightful and dangerous meſſage; but as he judged, I ſuppoſe, that the Council of God was held in no other land, but that of *Iſrael*, he hoped to break off his connection with it, by removing to a remote country among the Gentiles.

The viſion of *Micaiah* (1 Kings xxii. 19——24.) will ſet this affair in the ſtrongeſt light. *And he ſaid, Hear thou the word of the Lord: I ſaw the Lord ſitting on his throne, and all the hoſt of heaven ſtanding by him, on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord ſaid, who ſhall perſuade Ahab, that he may go up, and fall at Ramoth Gilead? And one ſaid on this manner, and another on that manner. And there came forth a ſpirit, and ſtood before the Lord, and ſaid, I will perſuade him. And the Lord ſaid unto him, Wherewith? And he ſaid, I will go forth, and I will be a lying ſpirit in the mouth of all his Prophets. And he ſaid, thou ſhalt perſuade him, and prevail alſo: go forth and do ſo.* Here the Lord is ſhewn in Council, after the manner of men, deliberating upon this affair. Now whether there was any ſuch real conſultation is not neceſſary for us to enquire. Thus it was repreſented in all its circumſtances to the Prophet, and ſtampt upon his mind in viſion; and it was God who directed him to uſe it in this form, as appears plainly from the ſolemn introduction, *Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord.* And though it ſhould only be a parabolical viſion, yet the drift and ſubſtance of it was a divine infallible truth, namely, that *Ahab*'s prophets propheſied lies; and this by the Divine Permiſſion, and the inſtigation of the wicked ſpirit, who was a lyar from the begining, and the father of lyes.

A paſſage ſimilar to this, is that in the book of *Job*, chap. i. 6. *Now there was a day when the Sons of God*, Angels, *came to preſent themſelves before the Lord, and Satan came alſo among them. And the Lord ſaid unto Satan, Whence comeſt thou? Then Satan anſwered the Lord*, &c. And again, chap. ii. 1, &c. Here we ſee is the ſame grand aſſembly in the caſe of *Job*, as in the foregoing inſtance of *Ahab*. The ſame hoſt of heaven, called here *the Sons of God*, preſenting themſelves before Jehovah, as in the viſion of *Micaiah* they are ſaid to ſtand on his right hand and on his left. A wicked ſpirit appears among them, here called *Satan*, an adverſary, and there *a lying Spirit*; both of them bent on miſchief, and ready to do hurt, as far as God ſhould give them leave. And the meaning in both caſes is the ſame, that God in his Wiſe Providence permitted Satan to afflict *Job*, and the lying ſpirit to deceive *Ahab*. Only *Micaiah* delivers his repreſentation as a Prophet, in the exerciſe of his office, and as he received it, that is to ſay, in a viſion; *I ſaw the Lord ſitting on his throne*, &c. The other, [probably *Job* himſelf, who was not unacquainted with the *Council* of God, as we have ſeen.] as an hiſtorian, inter-weaves it with the hiſtory in the plain, narrative ſtile, *There was a day*, &c. The things

delivered to us by both theſe ſacred writers, are in ſubſtance the ſame, equally high, and above the reach of meer human ſight and knowledge. Note——the repreſentations of this kind are founded in the doctrine of Angels, good and bad, eſpecially the former, as the inſtruments of Providence. A point revealed, no doubt, from the begining, and well underſtood in the earlieſt ages; witneſs *Jacob*'s ladder, with *the Angels of God aſcending and deſcending upon it. Gen.* xxviii. 12.

Iſaiah alſo in a viſion ſtood in the Council of God, chap. vi. 1, &c. *Where he ſaw the Lord ſitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it ſtood the Seraphim,* the angelic hoſt, &c. The matter in conſultation was, verſe 7. *Whom ſhall I ſend, and who will go* upon the prophetic errand, *for us,* uſing deliberative language, and the plural number, as in the two texts under conſideration, *Let us make man* ——*Let us go down.*——*Iſaiah* readily offered his ſervice, verſe 8. And the Lord delivered to him his commiſſion and meſſage, verſe 9. And he ſaid, *Go and tell this people,* &c.

Ezekiel in the ſame manner in viſion ſtood in the Council of the Lord, chap. i. 1. *The heavens were* (i. e. the temple was) *opened, and I ſaw viſions of God*; namely, the four living creatures, or Cherubims, repreſenting the church of God, attending upon *the glory of the Lord,* or the Shechinah, verſe 28, and ſeated upon a throne, verſe 26. *And he ſaid unto* Ezekiel, chap. ii. 3. *Son of Man, I ſend thee to the children of Iſrael,* &c.

Zechariah too, chap. i. 7, 8, &c. to the end of the ſixth chapter, is repreſented as converſing with the Lord in his Council, and with an Angel; though the ſcene is not deſcribed ſo diſtinctly as in the other places.

John alſo *in the ſpirit,* i. e. in a viſion, Rev. i. 10, was preſent in the ſame Council of God, deſcribed in the 4th and 5th chapters of the *Revelation.* chap. iv. 1. *A door was opened in heaven,* in the temple; *John* was invited to attend, a throne was ſet in heaven, with a majeſtic Perſonage upon it, attended by the Cherubim, or the Church, and the Angelic Hoſt. The matter, which was there very ſolemnly tranſacted, was the future ſtate of the Church to the end of the world.

This is the prophetic way of telling us *how* a thing was done, which really was done, but in a way to us inviſible. Thus things of the greateſt importance were repreſented in the ſtrongeſt images to the mind of the Prophet; and in this way Infinite Wiſdom would have them deſcribed and repreſented to us. Nor ſhould we quarrel with our Maker for creating us with ſuch faculties as are moſt affected and impreſt with truths, that are conveyed in this manner; for thoſe truths make the deepeſt impreſſion which firſt enter like a picture into the imagination, and from thence are ſtampt upon the memory.

Note——*Homer,* previouſly to Events, repreſents the conſultations of his fictitious deities in the ſame narrative way, to denote, that all things are ſubject to an over-ruling Providence. A method practiſed long before him, and very probably derived from the truly inſpired.

I ſhall only further obſerve, (1.) That סוד is ſometimes applied to worſhiping aſſemblies, *Pſal.* lxxxix. 7. cxi. 1. (2.) Sometimes it ſignifies the thing that is tranſacted, commanded, or eſtabliſhed in the Council

Council of God. *Pſal.* xxv. 14. *Prov.* iii. 32. So it may be underſtood, *Amos* iii. 7. *The Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth* סודו *his ſecret Council unto his ſervants the Prophets.*

CHAP. XXII.

Of the Patriarchal Religion.

WE ſhould now advance to the next Divine Diſpenſation, the calling of *Abraham*, but before we proceed it may be of uſe to gain the cleareſt notions we are able of the ſtate of Religion among the nations after the deluge.

About 425 years after the deluge, and 185 after the diſperſion, the Lord *ſaid unto Abraham*, (Gen. xii. 1.) *Get thee out of thy country*, which was *Ur* of the Chaldees, (*Gen.* xi. 28.) *and from thy kindred, and from thy father's houſe, unto a land that I will ſhew thee.* Compare this with *Joſh.* xxiv. 2. *Joſhua ſaid unto all the people, thus ſaith the Lord God of Iſrael, your fathers dwelt on the other ſide of the flood,* [in *Meſopotamia* beyond the river *Euphrates,*] *in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor; and they ſerved other Gods*; that is to ſay, they were idolaters. Some learned men ſuppoſe, that in the days of *Reu*, i. e. ſome time before the year 370. after the deluge, the *Egyptians* and *Babylonians* began to introduce idolatrous principles and practices; which from the fore-quoted place in *Joſhua*, it is certain, crept into the family of *Shem*; ſome, and ſome of the principal of his poſterity, growing vain in their imaginations, and worſhiping the heavenly bodies, with a divine, or however with an undue honor. For this ſpecies of idolatry ſeems to have been the moſt ancient, as this, and no other, is mentioned in the book of *Job.* chap. xxxi. 26, 27, 28. *If I have beheld the ſun when it ſhined; or the moon walking in brightneſs; and my heart hath been ſecretly inticed, or my mouth hath kiſſed my hand:——this alſo were an iniquity to be puniſhed by the judge, for I ſhould have denied the God that is above.*

The worſhip of the heavenly bodies is ſuppoſed to have prevailed among the nations in the days of *Moſes*, Deut. iv. 19. xvii. 3. and was continued long after, 2 *Kings* xxi. 3, 5. xxiii. 4. *Jer.* xliv. 17, 19. The ſplendor and great utility of the heavenly bodies would naturally ſtrike the minds of mankind; and there would not then, any more than at any other time, be wanting artful men, who for their own advantage, and the honour of ſuperior wiſdom, would ſupply arguments for this idolatry, as the moſt effectual mean of ſecuring all the enjoyments of life, and inculcate them ſtrongly upon the minds of the weak and credulous, who have always been the moſt numerous part of mankind. *Maimonides*, the learned *Jew*, (as quoted by Ainsworth upon *Gen.* iv. 26.) ſuppoſes the advocates of this corrupt worſhip argued after this manner.

They

"They ſaid——For as much as God hath created theſe heavenly bodies, "to govern the world, and ſet them on high, and imparted honor unto "them, and they are Miniſters that miniſter before him, it is meet that "men ſhould praiſe, and glorify, and give them honor. For this is the "will of God, that we magnify and honor whomſoever he magnifieth "and honoreth; even as a king would have them honored, that ſtand "before him; and this is honoring the king himſelf. When this thing "was come up into their hearts, they began to build temples to hea-"venly bodies, and to praiſe and glorify them with words, and to wor-"ſhip before them, that they might, in their miſguided opinion, obtain "favor of the Creator." Thus you ſee, the firſt corrupters of Religion had principles and reaſons; and perhaps as good as thoſe, who have in like manner corrupted Chriſtianity, by introducing idolatry into it.

This corruption was not at firſt univerſal, it ſpread gradually. And therefore, though in *Abraham*'s days it had made a conſiderable progreſs, yet even then, and for ſome time after, we meet with ſome eminent perſons, who were not of *Abraham*'s family, that retained a juſt ſenſe of God, and the purity of his worſhip. For inſtance, *Melchizedeck*, king of *Salem*, Gen. xiv. 18. who was (Heb. vii. 3.) *without father, without mother, without deſcent,* ἀγενεαλογητος, without a genealogy, *having neither beginning of days, nor end of life,* recorded in the hiſtory of the Patriarchs from *Noah* to *Abraham*. For (verſe 6.) *his deſcent*, or genealogy, *was not counted from them*, in the *Abrahamic* line; but for all that, he was a perſon of great eminence in Religion. *Gen.* xiv. 18, &c. "For he was a wor-"ſhiper of the true God, and a perſon of the moſt exemplary juſtice, and "ſincere piety, remaining abſolutely untainted, amidſt the general cor-"ruption of the country, in which he lived; and who for the better "promoting of true Religion, was himſelf a *prieſt*, as well as a *king*, and "performed the ſacred offices of it among his own people. This great "man came forth to meet, and to congratulate *Abraham*, and provided "him a princely entertainment for himſelf and his men, for their refreſh-"ment, after they had ingaged with, and defeated five kings. And "then, as prieſt, in which capacity he was ſuperior to *Abraham*, (Heb. "vii. 7.) he ſolemnly gave *Abraham* his bleſſing, or wiſh of happineſs; "putting up his hearty prayers to the great Creator and Governor of "the world, to confirm the bleſſing he had pronounced upon him; as "alſo his humble praiſes and thankſgivings for the remarkable mercies "of his late victory. And *Abraham*, on the other ſide, paid his ac-"knowledgment to the Almighty, by preſenting the tenth of what he "had taken in the battle to *Melchizedeck* his prieſt, by whom he had been "ſo devoutly bleſſed." Pyle.

Note——*Melchizedeck*'s prieſthood, as it was prior to that of the Jewiſh prieſts, ſo it was of a diſtinct and ſuperior order, as the Apoſtle argues, *Heb.* vii. For long after the inſtitution of the Jewiſh prieſthood, the Lord, with an oath declares, that the *Meſſiah* ſhould be *a prieſt for ever, after the order* [in the Hebrew עַל־דִּבְרָתִי *ſecundum rem*, according to the affair, the caſe; which as it relateth to a kind or ſort of prieſthood, is well tranſlated διὰ τάξιν] *of Melchizedeck*, Pſal. cx. 4. Of what

what order was *Melchizedeck?* The Apoſtle directs us to underſtand his names appellatively, or as denoting a character of moral excellence; *King of Righteouſneſs*, or a righteous king; and *King of Peace*, or bleſſing or happineſs, as he wiſhed well to others, and endeavoured to make them happy, (*Heb.* vii. 2.) which is the higheſt character of worth and excellence any moral agent can ſuſtain. Thus he was *the Prieſt*, or officiated in the ſervice *of the moſt High God*. And thus the object of his prieſthood, and conſequently his prieſthood itſelf, was of an eternal, unchangeable, and univerſal nature, even righteouſneſs and goodneſs, not limited to time or family. For the Scripture gives no account of his birth, death, or genealogy. We read of no predeceſſor or ſucceſſor in his office, as in the Jewiſh prieſts. [Note——this argument is adapted (*ad hominem*) to the Jews, who in this way, or by deſcent from *Aaron* and *Levi* judged of the validity of their prieſts.] But being of an univerſal unchangeable nature, muſt ſubſiſt as long as there are any moral agents, that live in obedience to God.

Thus our Lord was made prieſt after the order of *Melchizedeck*, i. e. *not after the law of a carnal* poſitive *commandment*, which confined the office to a fleſhly, mortal deſcent, and employed in certain external rites, and ceremonies; but *according to* that real *Power*, which is productive *of endleſs*, or eternal *life*, namely, true holineſs. *For* verſe 17, *God declared, thou art a prieſt for ever, after the order of the King of Righteouſneſs.* And chap. i. 8, 9. *Unto the Son he ſaith——Thy throne, O God, is everlaſting! A ſceptre of rectitude is the ſceptre of thy kingdom. Thou haſt loved righteouſneſs, and hated iniquity, therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee* king and prieſt, *with the oil of gladneſs above thy fellows.* And ſtill nearer to the caſe, chap. v. 8. *Though he were a ſon*, in the higheſt ſenſe, before he came into the world, *yet was he diſciplined in obedience*, as if he had been a learner, *by the things which he ſuffered.* Verſe 9. *And being made perfect*, having exhibited a perfect character of all moral excellence, *he became the author of eternal ſalvation to all them that obey him.* And it was on this account, verſe 10, that he was *called* and conſtituted *of God an high prieſt after the order of the King of Righteouſneſs. For*, as the Apoſtle concludes his diſſertation upon this very ſubject, (*Heb.* vii. 26.) *Such an high prieſt became us*, who is holy, *harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners, and made higher than the heavens*, or the Angels, in order to raiſe us to their happineſs.

Melchizedeck was eminently religious. And probably *Abraham*'s neighbours and confederates, *Mamre*, *Eſhcol*, and *Aner*, Gen. xiv. 13. were good and pious. For though they were *Amorites*, it was about 400 years after this, before the ſins of that nation were full.

The book of *Job* gives the cleareſt and moſt extenſive view of the Patriarchal Religion. The reality of his perſon, the eminence of his character, his fortitude and patience in very great afflictions, his preceding and ſubſequent felicity, are allowed by all; and it is generally ſuppoſed that he lived a generation or two before *Moſes*; and, probably, the book was wrote by himſelf, in time of his reſtored proſperity.

Some learned men indeed, as *Grotius*, *Cudworth*, *Le Clerc*, and others, pretend that this noble performance was written about a thouſand years after the time in which *Job* lived; namely, in or near the time of the *Babyloniſh*

Babyloniſh captivity; alledging, "that frequent Chaldaiſms, as the plural "יין for ים' are to be found in it; that ſome paſſages are taken from "the *Pſalms*, *Proverbs*, and *Eccleſiaſtes*; that there are more than a hun-"dred words, partly *Syriac*, partly *Arabic*, which are not to be found "in the other parts of Scripture; which are all ſigns that the author "lived in the later times, when many words, borrowed from the idiom "of the neighbouring nations, were admited into the Hebrew."

It is one mark of the ſimplicity of very ancient times, that in the inventory of *Job*'s eſtate, no mention is made of money, but only of oxen, ſheep, camels, aſſes, ſervants. And *Grotius* himſelf owns, "That there "is no mention in the book of *Job* of any law, or religious rites, but "ſuch as were traditional, [*chap.* viii. 8, 9, 10. xv. 18, 19. xxii. 15, "16.] nor of any points of hiſtory, nor of any idolatrous practices, but "ſuch as were of the more ancient times, before the Moſaic inſtitution. "[*Chap.* xx. 4, 5, meaning *Adam.* xxii. 15, 16.] And that the length "of *Job*'s life, extended to about 200 years, agrees alſo with the ſame "times; that the country where it happened was *Arabia*, as appears, "not only from the names of places, *Uz*, *Teman*, *Shuhah*, but from the "many *Arabic* words here uſed." And might not *Grotius* from hence have fairly and ſtrongly concluded, that the writer was an *Arabian?* No. He ſaith, "it was written by ſome Hebrew." Why ſo? Becauſe *Arabia*, *Job*'s country, is called *the Eaſt*. Chap. i. 3. And it was uſual with the Hebrews to call *Arabia* the Eaſt, as he has ſhewn upon *Mat.* ii. 1. But the Arabian *Magi* themſelves, in the next verſe, call their own country *Arabia*, the Eaſt; and ſo might *Job*, or any other Arabian in *Job*'s time. The Eaſt-country was the common name of *Arabia*, as the Weſt-country is the general name of one part of *England*. Many words, uſed in this book, are not to be found in other parts of Scripture. The reaſon is, becauſe it is ſo ancient, that ſome words therein are grown obſolete, and their true meaning is hard to be recovered. It is therefore the moſt difficult, becauſe it is the moſt ancient book in the ſacred code. Had it been wrote in later times, the language would have been more intelligible.

It is no argument that the author of this book took ſimilar or ſame expreſſions from *David*'s or *Solomon*'s writings, [compare *Pſalm* cvii. 40. with *Job* xii. 21, 24.] becauſe it is more probable, that *David* and *Solomon* borrowed ſuch expreſſions from the book of *Job*. [Compare *Job* xxxix. 33. *Mat.* xxiv. 28.] *Schultens*, a very good judge, affirms, that the ſtyle of the book hath all the marks of a moſt venerable and remote antiquity; and that the Chaldaiſms, as ſome call them, particularly the plurals in יין are true Hebrew and Arabic, and that of the moſt ancient ſtamp. *Job* is honorably mentioned with *Noah* and *Daniel*, Ezek. xiv. 12——20. Hence it follows, (1.) That *Job* is no fictitious character, but a real perſon, as truly as *Noah* and *Daniel*. (2.) That he was, as well as they, a perſon of diſtinguiſhed piety. (3.) That he was well known and celebrated as ſuch amongſt the *Jews*, to whom *Ezekiel*'s prophecy was directed. (4.) That he muſt either have been of the ſeed of *Iſrael*, or, like *Noah*, of the Patriarchal times; otherwiſe the *Jews*, ſeparated from, and raiſed in ſpiritual privileges above all other nations, would

would never have propoſed to themſelves one of their Gentile, uncircumciſed neighbours, of whom they had a mean opinion, as an example of the greateſt piety, nor have admited his ſtory into their Canon. If he was of the Patriarchal times (for an Iſraelite he could not be) he muſt have been at the diſtance of about a thouſand years before *Ezekiel*. Meer oral tradition of ſuch a perſon could not have ſubſiſted through ſo long a ſpace of time, without appearing, at laſt, as uncertain or fabulous. There muſt, therefore, have been ſome hiſtory of *Job* in *Ezekiel*'s time; no other hiſtory, but that which we now have, and which has always had a place in the Hebrew code, was ever heard of, or pretended. Therefore this muſt be the hiſtory of *Job* in *Ezekiel*'s time; and which muſt have been generally known, and read as true and authentic, and, conſequently, muſt have been wrote near to the age in which the fact was tranſacted, and not in after times, when its credibility would have been greatly diminiſhed.

In ſhort, ſhould I aver, that this is the oldeſt and nobleſt book in the world, I ſhould have the vote of all the beſt critics; and the very frame and caſt of the book itſelf would juſtify the aſſertion.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of Job's *Caſe and Character.*

THE Book of *Job* is the Hiſtory of a real ſufferer, *Job*; and the Subſtance of a real converſation with his friends, about his ſufferings, in a poetic dreſs. *Job* was a prince of the greateſt eminence, wealth, and authority among the people of the eaſt; whoſe piety and integrity equalled his temporal grandeur, *chap.* i. 1, 2, 3; of the ſtricteſt religion and virtue; the patron of the injured poor and fatherleſs; the ſcourge of injuſtice and oppreſſion; highly honored and eſteemed by the good, revered and dreaded by the vicious and profane, *Chapters* xxix. and xxxi. This man ſo good, and ſo glorious, was, by the Divine Permiſſion, and malice of the Devil, at once reduced to the moſt indigent and deplorable circumſtances, ſtript of all his ſubſtance, bereaved of all his children, ſeven ſons and three daughters, and, ſoon after, ſeized with a moſt noiſom and painful diſeaſe, from head to foot; which rendered him the moſt ſhocking ſpectacle of ſorrow and wretchedneſs. The country, ſo far as the fame of his grandeur and religion had ſpread, would be full of his ſtory and of aſtoniſhment. The religious would be inclined to conclude, that ſuch ſignal and ſudden calamities, could be no other than the judgments of God upon a man, who, under the maſk of religion, had concealed a wicked and profligate life. The wicked and profane would triumph in his ſufferings, as a juſtification of their own bad principles and practices, and as a demonſtration of

of the inſignificancy of the ſtricteſt regards to God and his worſhip. *Chap.* xvi. 9, 10, 11. xvii. 6. His relations and acquaintance, ſtruck with horror and averſion to ſuch a deſpicable, vile, abandoned creature, would not own him. His wife and family treated him with unkindneſs and neglect, *chap.* xix. 13——19. The baſeſt of men broke in upon him like a legion of fiends, made his afflictions their merriment, treated him with all manner of indignities, calumnies, and ſlander; and even *ſpared not to ſpit in his face*, chap. xxx. 1—15. Scarce ever were the feelings of the human heart oppreſſed with ſuch a complicated load of grief; ſcarce ever was a profeſſion of religion ſo much expoſed to cenſure, reproach, and inſult.

And how did the good man bear all this? With heroic bravery, that is to ſay, with a patience as ſteady and uniform as human infirmity will admit. [*Patience is ſincere adherence to God and duty, under all difficulties and diſcouragements*; and the ground of patience is *faith*, or *a full perſuaſion of the power, goodneſs, and wiſdom of God.*] When his calamities, the loſs of his numerous herds, flocks and ſervants, and of his deareſt children, partly by the hands of violence, partly by lightening and ſtorm; when theſe calamities ruſhed upon him like an inundation, though he felt all the pangs of the moſt grievous affliction, and uſed ſuch expreſſions of his doleful caſe, as were cuſtomary at that time; [*Chap.* i. 20. —— *rent his mantle, ſhaved his head, fell down upon the ground*, chap. ii. 8, 12. *Sprinkled duſt upon their heads*; See 1 *Sam.* iv. 12. 2 *Sam.* xiii. 19. *Joſh.* vii. 6. *Ezek.* xxvii. 30. *Iliad* xviii. 22.] yet he behaved like a wiſe and good man, proſtrating himſelf upon the ground in a humble ſenſe of his own unworthineſs, and a patient ſubmiſſion to the Will of God, compoſing his mind into a calm and quiet adoration of his ſupreme Dominion and unblemiſhed Juſtice, *chap.* i. 20, 21. "I came," ſaith he, "by the "Divine Will into the world, a naked helpleſs creature; and by the "ſame Will I muſt ſhortly return to the duſt. I am bereaved of my "moſt valuable and deareſt temporal enjoyments, but by the permiſſion "of a wiſe and righteous God. His own he gave; his own, for wiſe "ends, he hath taken away. I acquieſce in his Sovereign Diſpoſals, "and adore the inconteſtible purity and righteouſneſs of his dealings "with me." O brave Soul! O happy Man, who could keep up good thoughts of God, and communion with him under the ſharpeſt ſtrokes of his rod!

When covered over with painful boyls, in the place and poſture of an humble penitent, he was probably pouring out his ſubmiſſions and ſupplications to Heaven, his wife ſpared not to reproach him with his prepoſterous godlineſs. *Chap.* ii. 9, 10. *Doſt thou ſtill retain thine integrity by bleſſing God, and dying?* q. d. "Will you bleſs God when he is deſtroy-"ing you? Will you call upon him, and believe he is good, when he "hath ruined your eſtate and family, and, in ſpite of all your humble "ſubmiſſions, is ſlaughtering your body, and within a ſtroke of your "life?" But *Job* returned no other than a mild anſwer, as became a good man, and affectionate huſband. "You ſpeak not like yourſelf," ſaid he, "but as a woman void of underſtanding. Is it fit God ſhould "always ſmile upon ſinful creatures? Shall we ſay, he is not juſt when "he brings us into afflictions? We receive what pleaſeth us with joy,

"and

" and it is but reaſonable that we receive what is ungrateful with a calm " reſignation; ſeeing both come from the ſame Wiſe and Sovereign " Diſpoſer of all things." Still *Job* is patient, and, under every trial, adheres to God and duty.

The compoſure and ſteadineſs of his mind was more ſeverely tried by his three friends, *Eliphaz*, *Bildad*, and *Zophar*, men of the ſame rank, and of like good ſenſe and piety; who dwelt in ſome of the adjacent provinces, and in whoſe familiarity he had, probably, been long happy. The report of his ſufferings, of the ruin of his character, and the wound thereby given to religion, having reached their ears, they agreed, with a ſincere intention, to join their endeavours in adminiſtering the only advice and conſolation, they apprehended, his caſe would admit. For, as the ſuſpicions were very ſtrong, and his calamities carried evident marks of Divine Inflictions, they had the ſame opinion of them with the reſt of the world, and believed they were the juſt judgments of God upon a hypocrite, and therefore were determined, by all means, to fix a ſenſe of guilt upon his conſcience, in order to bring him to true repentance, and ſo to a ſolid intereſt in the Divine Favor and bleſſing. But when they were come, and had found their late flouriſhing, honorable, and highly eſteemed friend, reduced to the moſt lothſome and miſerable wretch, that was ſiting in the aſhes, they were aſtoniſhed beyond expreſſion; and being confirmed in their evil ſuſpicions, though they ſat with him on the ground, yet, as their bad opinion of him would not allow them to ſay any thing comfortable and incouraging, they choſe to ſay nothing at all for ſeven or ſeveral days together, *chap.* ii. 12. The ſight of his old acquaintance, and their unfavorable manner of condolence, raiſed his paſſion of ſorrow to ſuch a pitch, that it burſt out into a torrent of the moſt bitter reflections upon his birth-day; wiſhing it were ſtruck out of the number of days, or rendered as odious and deteſtable to all others, as it was to himſelf.

Upon this, *Eliphaz*, probably the oldeſt and moſt honorable of the three, addreſſed himſelf to *Job*, and, in the ſofteſt manner, openeth their ſenſe of his caſe; namely, that, in their apprehenſions, he had been very defective in the character to which he had pretended; that great ſufferings muſt be the puniſhment of great ſins; and that they could recommend to him no other method of regaining his former peace and proſperity, but repentance, and ſeeking unto God for pardon. In ſhort, they ſoon declared plainly, that they judged he had been a very wicked man, and that his calamities were an evident indication of the wrath of God againſt him as ſuch. This *Job* flatly denied; and this is the matter in diſpute between him and his friends. Which diſpute, as is uſual in ſuch caſes, was carried on with a growing eagerneſs and heat on both ſides; and on both ſides might occaſion ſome expreſſions too ſtrong and exagerating.

His friends argue from experience, and what they had obſerved to be the uſual method of Divine Providence. They had ſeen many inſtances of wicked men, or of thoſe who had paſſed for ſuch, remarkably puniſhed; and hence they formed to themſelves a general maxim, that where they ſaw great wretchedneſs and ſufferings, there muſt be crimes proportionably great. To this *Job* alſo oppoſes obſervation and experience;

rience; and ſhews, that the rule of judging, they had formed to themſelves, was by no means right, or without exception. That good men were ſometimes afflicted, and the wicked flouriſhing and happy; and that, for the moſt part, things were dealt out here promiſcuouſly. That this was more eſpecially obſervable in times of war and peſtilence, and ſuch other ſweeping calamities, where the good and bad fall undiſtinguiſhed. *chap.* ix. 22, 23. To all which he adds, that it was a very heavy aggravation of his miſery, to hear his friends, ſo well acquainted with him, men of ſenſe and diſtinction, charge him with crimes which his ſoul abhorred, and of which God, who had afflicted him, knew that he was innocent. To him he would appeal, and ſtill adhere in life and death, though he did not know why he had dealt ſo ſeverely with him. And ſo ſtrongly did *Job* aſſert the integrity of his religion and virtue, (*chapters* xxix. and xxxi.) that his friends, though perhaps not convinced, were however put to ſilence. (*Chap.* xxxii. 1.)

Upon this, *Elihu*, a young man of good underſtanding, who, probably, with others, was a byſtander and witneſs to this debate, (*chap.* xxxii. 15.) acts as moderator between *Job* and his friends, and cenſures both very freely and judiciouſly; only he charges *Job* with no crime as the cauſe of his afflictions, but thinks he had not managed the diſpute about them with ſo much calmneſs and ſubmiſſion to God as became his piety.

Finally, the Lord anſwered *Job* out of the *whirlwind*, (the Septuagint add, *and clouds*) a token of the Divine Preſence. So *Ezekiel*'s viſions were introduced, *Ezek.* i. 4. *And I looked, and behold, a whirlwind came out of the North, a great cloud and a fire.* Perhaps, *Elihu* ſaw this token of the Divine Preſence approaching. *Job* xxxvii. 22, *&c. Fair weather* [זָהָב *gold*, ſplendor, the ſplendor of the Divine Preſence. See *Schultens* in loc.] *cometh* [יֵאָתֶה will come, or is coming, ſpeedily,] *out of the North; with God is terrible Majeſty.* The ſpeech of Deity, (*chap.* xxxviii. xxxix. xl. xli.) moſt inimitably grand and ſublime, repreſenting the vaſt extent of the Divine Wiſdom and power in the works of creation, which *Job* and his friends had well ſtudied, and from which they knew how to deduce proper concluſions, ſhews, 1. That all things in the ſkie, the air, the earth, the ſea, are produced and diſpoſed in a manner far beyond the reach of human wiſdom and power. Conſequently, 2. That man is not qualified to diſpoſe of himſelf, or of any other being. That God may have wiſe and good reaſons for his ways and works, and dealings with us, which we cannot comprehend; and therefore it is our duty, in all caſes, to acquieſce and ſubmit. 3. That he who has given various natures and inſtincts to animals, can give being and life, when and where, and in what degree he pleaſes. 4. That he is preſent to, cares for, ſuſtains and directs every living thing; and therefore that we ought to truſt in him for a happy iſſue of any of his inflictions. 5. That the wiſeſt of men ſhould be very cautious and modeſt in cenſuring the ways of Providence.

Chap. xlii. Job humbleth himſelf before God, ſacrificeth for his friends; his family is reſtored, his eſtate is doubled.

Rules

Rules to be obſerved in expounding the Book of *Job*.

I. He that would rightly explain this book muſt, as much as he can, imagine himſelf in the ſame afflicted condition.

II. Every daring thought, or ardent expreſſion, which occurs in the ſpeeches of this afflicted, and exaſperated man, is not to be vindicated; yet, as he was a great man, and a prince, he may be allowed to uſe bold and animated language.

III. We ſhall certainly judge amiſs, if we think every thing wrong, which will not ſuit with the politneſs of our manners. Allowance muſt be made for the ſimplicity of thoſe times.

IV. In judging of *Job*'s character, we muſt ſet the noble ſtrains of his piety againſt the unguarded expreſſions of his ſorrow.

V. It is not his innocence, ſtrictly ſpeaking, which *Job* inſiſts on, but his ſincerity. *Chap.* vii. 20, 21.

VI. Except their hard cenſures of *Job*, his friends ſpeak well and religiouſly.

VII. His friends incouraged *Job* to hope for a temporal deliverance; (*chap.* v. 18, *&c.* vii. 20, *&c.* xi. 14, *&c.*) but *Job* deſpaired of it, and expected his bodily diſorder would terminate in death, (*chap.* vi. 11, 12. vii. 6, 7, 8, 21. xvii. 1, 13, 14, 15. xix. 10. Though, in the increaſing heat of the diſpute, they ſeem to drop this ſentiment, in their following anſwers, as if they ſuppoſed *Job* to be too bad to hope for any favor from God.) He hoped, however, that his Character would be cleared in the day of judgment; though he was greatly concerned that it could not be cleared before. That after a life led in the moſt conſpicuous virtues, his reputation, in the opinion of his neareſt friends, would ſet under a black cloud; and, with regard to the ignorant and profane, leave an odious reproach upon a profeſſion of religion. This touched him to the heart; exaſperated all his ſufferings, and made him often wiſh, that God would bring him to his trial here, in this life; that his integrity might be vindicated, and all, friends and enemies, might underſtand the true end or deſign of God in his ſufferings; and the honor of religion might be ſecured. *Chap.* x. ii. 2, 3. *Is it good unto thee, that thou ſhouldſt—ſhine upon the counſel of the wicked?* who from my caſe take occaſion to reproach and vilify true religion, and to confirm themſelves in their wicked and idolatrous practices. *Chap.* viii. 20, 21, 22. xi. 17—20. xvi. 9—11.

VIII. He could only affirm his integrity, but could give no ſpecial ſatisfactory reaſon, why God ſhould afflict him in a manner ſo very extraordinary, and beyond all preceding caſes, that were ever known in the world. This very much perplext and embarraſt his mind, and laid him under a great diſadvantage in the diſpute. And, for one thing, it is on this account that he is ſo earneſt to come to a conference with God, to know his mind and meaning. *Chap.* x. 2. *Shew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me.* See Bp. Patrick's Paraphraſe upon the place, from *ver.* 2d to the 8th. He knew very well he could not abſolutely juſtify himſelf before God, *chap.* ix. 2, 3, *&c. ver.* 17. *For he breaks*

me with a tempeſt, he multiplieth my wounds without a cauſe, or without any apparent reaſon. *Chap.* vii. 12, 20. The whole xxiii[d] chapter relates to this point; in which he wiſhes he could come to the dwelling place of God, (*ver.* 3.) and ſpread his caſe before him, and argue about it at large, (*ver.* 4.) for he had turned his thoughts every way, and could make nothing of it, (*ver.* 8, 9.) only he was ſure God knew he was an upright man, (*ver.* 10, 11, 12.) *But*, (ver. 13.) *he is in one* בְּאֶחָד or in unity, ſupreme above all others, abſolutely entire, keeping his mind and deſigns to himſelf, *and none can turn*, or oblige him to alter his reſolution. All that we can ſay is, that he doth whatever is agreeable to his own wiſdom. For (*ver.* 14.) what he hath reſolved to inflict upon me he hath accompliſhed; and many ſuch things he doth, of which he will not give us the reaſon. To the ſame purpoſe underſtand *chap.* xxvii. 2, 3, 4, 14. and *chap.* xxviii. 2. *He hath taken away my judgment*, i. e. the rule by which I might judge of the reaſon of my afflictions. This point, in reference to God, *Elihu* tells him (*chap.* xxxiii. 13.) he had urged to no purpoſe, *ſeeing he gives no account of his matters*, or will not reveal to us the ſecrets of his Providence.

IX. In ſuch a noble performance, if any thing ſeems to be ſaid not in conſiſtency, or not in character, we ſhould rather ſuſpect our own judgment, than the good ſenſe of the Author. The fault is not in the book, but in our underſtanding.

X. That ſenſe which beſt agrees with the ſubject, or the point in hand, or which ſtands in the beſt connection with the context, ſhould always be judged the beſt ſenſe.

Criticisms.

Chap. i. 5. To bleſs a perſon is a form of valediction, 2 *Sam.* xix. 39. So here, *My ſons have* taken leave of *God*. And ſo 1 Kings xxi. 13. *Naboth* hath bid farewell to *God and the King*, or hath treated them with contempt.

Chap. iii. 25, 26. *The thing that I greatly feared is come upon me*, &c. This alludes to the loſs of his children, for whom he was very much concerned, *chap.* i. 5. But *chap.* xxix. 18. and xxx. 26. relate to his circumſtances in general.

Chap. xiii. 12. *Your remembrances* זִכְרֹנֵיכֶם *your* [quoting of] *memorable ſayings are like aſhes*, or dirt; *your bodies* גַּבֵּיכֶם *your heaps*, eminencies, your ſtrongeſt arguments, *to heaps of clay*, ſoon waſhed away.

CHAP. XXIV.

CHAP. XXIV.

The Doctrines of the PATRIARCHAL AGE.

THE inſtructions, particularly deſigned to be given in the Book of *Job*, might not be ſo well underſtood in that age of the world; namely, that great ſufferings are not always an argument of great ſins; but that very good men may be very much afflicted in this world; that therefore we ſhould not cenſure any under calamities, be the hand of God ever ſo apparent, unleſs the crimes be likewiſe certain and apparent. That we ought not to complain of God in any condition, as if he neglected us, or dealt hardly with us, but rather meekly ſubmit to his Bleſſed Will; who never doth any thing without reaſon, though we cannot always comprehend it, adoring and revering the unſearchable depths of his Wiſe Counſel, and believing that all at laſt will turn out to our advantage, if like his ſervant *Job* we perſevere in faith, hope, and patience. This was *Job*'s real character, though not without errors. No error can be diſcerned in his behaviour, but what the uncharitable cenſures of his friends provoked him to. Thus he was put upon too frequent and too ſtrong juſtifications of himſelf, being withal extremely perplexed to give a plain and ſatisfactory account, why God afflicted him ſo ſeverely.

God, in the iſſue, ſatisfied him, that he had juſt and weighty reaſons; and, in particular, by doubling his proſperity, that he deſigned to make him a pattern of patience and reward. *James* v. 11. *Behold, we count them happy who endure* patiently the greateſt ſufferings. *Ye have heard of the* wonderful *patience of Job, and have ſeen,* in his caſe, *the* happy *end* to which *the Lord* brought his calamities. Whence we may learn, that under the ſevereſt viſitations, the Lord is very compaſſionate and merciful to the ſincere and upright, and will amply recompence them in a future world.

Thus the great point in religion, before dark and doubtful, relating to the Providence of God, and the ſufferings of good men, is cleared up with ſuch evidence, as can no where elſe be found but in the goſpel of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Though this point might not be ſo well underſtood, before it was thus illuſtrated, yet there are ſeveral other important articles of religion, of which *Job* and his friends, and doubtleſs many others, had very juſt and clear conceptions. As the being and perfections of God; that we can receive neither good nor evil but from him, the Author of our being, and Diſpoſer of all events; that he ſees and orders all things in heaven and earth; that there can be no iniquity with him; that he is the Friend and Patron of virtue, and hates, and will puniſh vice and wickedneſs; nevertheleſs, that he is merciful and gracious, and will certainly pardon and bleſs thoſe who ſincerely repent of their ſins, and return unto him. That he is to be ſupremely reverenced and worſhiped, as the ſole Sovereign of the univerſe, by prayers and ſacrifices, by purity and integrity

heart, by juſtice in all our dealings, by all acts of charity, goodneſs, and benevolence to others, particularly, to the helpleſs and indigent; by temperance and ſobriety, curbing irregular deſires and appetites; that men ſhould not be elated and puffed up by large poſſeſſions, nor put their truſt in riches, *chap.* xxxi. 24, 25; that they ſhould abhor idolatry, *ver.* 26, 27, 28; that they ſhould not wiſh evil to an enemy, nor rejoice in his misfortunes, *ver.* 29, 30, much leſs think of murdering him; that they ſhould abſtain from adultery and fornication, *ver.* 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11; from theft, rapin, and deceit, *ver.* 5, 6, 7. For the puniſhment of which crimes he mentions judges in his days, (ver. 11, 28.) and was himſelf one of the chief, chap. xxix. 7, 9, &c.

Theſe, and ſuch like principles of natural religion, are allowed both by *Job* and his friends, and therefore were the religion of the Patriarchs, as indeed they are the principles of true and acceptable religion in all ages and parts of the world.

Further; the religious in that, and the preceding, as well as ſubſequent ages, I am perſuaded, entertained the faith and hope of a future ſtate. This hath been the popular belief of all nations from time immemorial; and it is ſcarce credible, in the nature of the thing, that the greateſt happineſs of this life, which might at any uncertain time, and and at length would infallibly and totally be demoliſhed by death, ſhould ever become a ſolid principle of religion, conſidered as the ſole reward of piety and virtue.

However it appears, that *Job* expected a future world, for he had hope with regard to his condition, but not in this world; therefore, his hope muſt be in a future ſtate. Chap. xiii. 15. 16. הֵן־יִקְטְלֵנִי לֹא אִיחָל *Lo*, or certainly, *he will ſlay me: I will not hope*, non eſt quod ſperem, I have no ground to hope, that I ſhall ſurvive my ſufferings, *yet will I maintain* the integrity of *my own ways before him. And even this ſhall be for ſalvation to me*; [where but in a future world?] *for a hypocrite ſhall not come before him*; ſhall not have confidence to preſent himſelf before his tribunal. Chap. xxiii. 10. *But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I ſhall come forth as gold.* As *Job* abſolutely deſpairs of any temporal deliverance, this muſt neceſſarily be underſtood of the hope he entertained of having his innocence cleared in the day of judgment.

He had, moreover, a notion of the reſurrection. Chap. xiv. 7. *For there is hope of a tree, if it is cut down, that it will ſprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not ceaſe.* Ver. 8. *Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the ſtock thereof die in the ground,* ver. 9. *yet through the ſcent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a* new *plant.* Ver. 10. *And ſhall man die, and totally waſte away? And ſhall man give up the ghoſt, and where is he?* Or be no more for ever? Ver. 11. *As the waters fail from the ſea,* as the ſea ebbs and flows again, *and the river,* or brook in the dry ſandy country of *Arabia, decays, and drieth up,* in ſummer, but is made a brook again by the rains and ſnows of winter; ver. 12. *So man lieth down, and riſeth not, till the heavens be no more; they ſhall not awake, nor be raiſed out of their ſleep,* to return to the affairs and poſſeſſions of this world. Ver. 13. And *Oh that thou, O*

God,

God, *wouldſt hide me in the grave*, in that ſtate of ſleep and inſenſibility, *that thou wouldſt keep me ſecret*, in that ſilent retirement, *until thy wrath be paſt*; *that thou wouldſt appoint me a ſet time, and remember me* to reſtore me to a new and better life! Ver. 14. *If a man die, ſhall he live again?* Or ſhall a man live again, after he is dead? Then I will patiently wait all the days of the time thou ſhalt be pleaſed to appoint, till my happy renovation ſhall come. Ver. 15. *Thou ſhalt call, and I will* joyfully *anſwer thee*; *thou wilt have a longing deſire to* reſtore *the work of thy hands.* Ver. 16. *Though now*, at preſent, *thou numbereſt my ſteps*, &c.

Chap. xix. 23. Obſerve the ſolemn introduction; *Oh, that my words*, which I am going to ſpeak, *were now written! Oh, that they were printed in a book!* Ver. 24. *That they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock* [my grave-ſtone, SCHULTENS.] *for ever!* This is too grand for temporal deliverance. Why ſhould that be recorded upon a rock, as a laſting monument to all mankind? But it very well ſuits the noble and ſublime hope of a reſurrection and future judgment, worthy of univerſal attention. Ver. 25. *For I know*, or am well aſſured, *that my* גֹּאֲלִי *Vindicator*, [the Vindicator of my innocence is] *living, and that at the laſt over the duſt*, [the dead, that hath been reduced to duſt,] *he ſhall ariſe*, [to execute judgment, *Job* xxxi. 13, 14. *Pſal.* lxxiv. 22. lxxxii. 8.] Verſe 26. *And* though *after my ſkin they ſhall deſtroy this*, [or this body ſhall be deſtroyed,] *yet from my* reſtored *fleſh I ſhall with pleaſure ſee God.* [Vide R. חזה] verſe 27. *Whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf*, [to do me juſtice, as chap. v. 27,—*for thy good* [for thyſelf] *and mine eyes ſhall behold*; *but* זר *a ſtranger* to goodneſs and juſtice ſhall *not* behold him in the ſame manner. *My reins are conſumed in my boſom* [in ardent expectation of this glorious event. *N. B.* כלה *ſequente* עין, נפש *vel* רוח deſiderium, ingens, flagrans et conſumens ſignificat; videſis Pſalms lxxxiv. 2. cxix. 82, 123. cxliii. 7. Sic quoque de כליות renes, ſtatuendum.]

Obſerve—if after his ſkin, his body alſo was deſtroyed, how could he out-live this deſtruction, ſo as to be a man proſperous and happy again in this world? Had this been his fixed belief, his frequent wiſhing for death would be utterly unaccountable, and his tragical complaints ridiculous, and his deſpair of health and happineſs in this world a contradiction.

If wicked men, though ſometimes in great wretchedneſs, [chap xxi. 16, &c.] are alſo ſometimes proſperous and powerful, *verſe* 7, &c. the proper inference is, *verſe* 30. *That the wicked are reſerved unto the day of deſtruction*, and that *they ſhall be brought forth to the day of wrath*; not in this world, for that would have cut the neck of *Job*'s argument at once, and have fallen in directly with that of his friends. Chap. xxxi. 2, 3.

Chap. xxvii. 8. *For what is the hope of an hypocrite*, in the future ſtate, *though he hath gained much* in this world; *when God takes away his ſoul* at death? This ſuppoſeth a hope after death.—Again, chap. xxxi. 13, 14. *What then ſhall I do when God riſeth up* to judgment? Not in this world, where his ſufferings were as great as could be, and where he did not expect they would be abated.—Laſtly, his *friends had not ſpoken of God the*

thing that was right, as *Job* had done, chap. xlii. 7, 8. But, ſeting aſide a future ſtate, the friends would have ſpoke more worthily of God, by vindicating his Providence in the exact diſtribution of good and evil in this life; and *Job*, who aſſerted the contrary, would have miſrepreſented his dealings with mankind.

The Patriarchs before and after *Job*, and the *Iſraelites* before *Chriſt came*, had a notion of a future ſtate.—By ſacrifices was plainly ſhewn, that a way was open to the Divine Favor and Acceptance; and the favor of God imports happineſs, which to *Abel*, who was for that very reaſon, becauſe he was accepted of God, unjuſtly ſlain, could be only in a future ſtate. *Heb.* xi. 4. Και δι' αυτης αποθανων *and dying on account of that* his faith *he yet ſpeaketh* an inviſible future ſtate of reward.—The tranſlation of *Enoch* and *Elijah*, in two diſtant ages, were well known demonſtrations of a future ſtate of reward and glory.—They were certainly acquainted with God and Angels, and heaven where both reſided. *Gen.* xxii. 11, And the connection between this world and heaven, by the miniſtry of Angels, was clearly repreſented to *Jacob*, Geneſis xxviii. 12. They muſt, therefore, have a notion of another and better world.

The promiſe to *Abraham*, Geneſis xvii. 7. *I will be a God unto thee*, we ſhall find is the ſame with the goſpel promiſe, and therefore muſt include the gift of eternal life. And as that promiſe was ſure to *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, when they were dead, (*Exodus* iii. 6.) our Lord rightly inſers, that they would riſe again. (*Luke* xx. 37, 38.) *For* God *is not a God of the dead*, who cannot, as ſuch, be benefited by him, *but of the living*; for though they are dead, *they all live unto him*, or with reſpect of him, as he will raiſe them all to life again.—And the Patriarchs thus underſtood this promiſe; for when they conſidered and repreſented their life in this world as a pilgrimage, *Geneſis* xlvii. 9. or a ſtate of ſojourning or traveling, they plainly intimated that they were ſeeking, πατριδα, their Father's country *i. e.* the heavenly country or city. *Heb.* xi. 13—16. Had the proſpects of *Moſes* been confined to this world, doubtleſs he would have preferred the pleaſures and honours of *Pharaoh*'s court; but by refuſing them, and chuſing rather to ſuffer with the people of God, he plainly indicated, that *he had reſpect to the* future *recompence of reward*. Heb. xi. 24, 25, 26.

It is certain the *Jews*, even during their peculiarity, were under the *Abrahamic*, or Goſpel covenant, promiſing the pardon of ſin, and eternal life, as well as under the law, or *Sinai* covenant. *Deut.* xxix. 12, 13. And ſurely, if they were admited to a covenant of life and immortality, they could not be ignorant of a future ſtate. Nor can it be judged at all improbable, that *Moſes* propounds eternal life to them in ſuch paſſages as this, *Deut.* xxx. 6. *The Lord thy God will circumciſe thy heart, and the heart of thy ſeed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy ſoul, that thou mayſt live.* This our Lord underſtood of eternal life, *Luke* x. 25, &c. When one aſked him, *What ſhall I do to inherit eternal life?* he ſent him to the law of *Moſes*; and when the enquirer readily quoted the rule of life given by *Moſes*, our Lord replied, *Thou haſt anſwered well; this do, and thou ſhalt live*, meaning eternally. Which leads us to underſtand *Moſes* in the ſame ſenſe, when he propoſes life as the reward of their ſincere religion, virtue, and goodneſs. *Deut.* xxx. 15, 19, 20.

19, 20. *Lev.* xviii. 5. compared with *Romans* x. 5. *Gal.* iii. 10, 11, 12. Indeed life and proſperity in the land of *Canaan*, is intermixed with ſuch promiſes. This is to be conſidered as addreſſed to them in a national capacity, and with reſpect to the covenant of peculiarity. [Note—*Life* is put for eternal life, *John* vi. 47, 48, 52, 53, 58.] רֵאשִׁית is the begining, or former part; אַחֲרִית properly denotes, what comes after, the after part, time, or ſtate. Thus *Job*'s time, after his afflictions were over, is called his *ahharith*, chap. xlii. 12. So is a man's poſterity, or thoſe that come after him in being. *Amos* iv. 2.

Sometimes it ſignifies the happy conſequence, or ſequel of a courſe of action, *Proverbs* xxiv. 14, 20; frequently after-days, or times in this world; but is never uſed more properly than to denote a future ſtate after death. *Num.* xxiii. 10. *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my* ahharith, *my after*, or future *ſtate, be like his.* Pſalm lxxiii. 3—18. The wicked lived in proſperity, and died an eaſy death. *There are no bands in their death*, verſe 4. I envied them, ſaith *David*, verſe 17, *until I went into the ſanctuary* of God; *then underſtood I their* ahharith, *future ſtate* after death. *Surely thou haſt ſet them in ſlippery places; thou haſt caſt them down into* eternal *deſtruction*, &c. Verſe 20. *As a dream after one is awake; ſo, O Lord, when thou awakeſt* [בְּעִיר in awaking *them*, or when they are awakened] *thou wilt deſpiſe*, [debaſe, pour contempt upon, *Daniel* xii. 2.] *their image* [צַלְמָם their vain, ſhadowy, unſubſtantial condition.] Verſe 23. *Nevertheleſs I am continually with thee*, [the object of thy ſpecial care.] Verſe 24—27. *Thou ſhalt guide me by thy counſel, and afterward receive me to glory*, &c. *Proverbs* xxiii. 17, 18. *Surely there is an end*, ahharith, an after-ſtate. *Jer.* xvii. 11. *As the bird Kore hatcheth eggs, which ſhe did not lay, ſo he that getteth riches, and not by right, ſhall leave them in the midſt of his days, and at his end* [ובאחריתו in his after—or future-ſtate,] *ſhall be* נבל *a fool*, vile, contemptible. Verſe 13.——They that depart from me *ſhall be written in the earth*, not regiſtered in heaven, in the book of life. *Deut.* xxxii. 29——their latter end, their after——or future-ſtate. *Pſalm* xxxvii. 37, 38.——*the end*, ahharith, *of that man is peace*, happineſs. *But the tranſgreſſors ſhall be utterly deſtroyed* [where but in the future world?] *the end*, ahharith, *of the wicked ſhall be cut off.* Deut. xiv. 1, 2. *Ye are the children of the Lord your God*; (of an immortal Father) *ye ſhall not cut yourſelves, nor make any baldneſs between your eyes for the dead.* They muſt not mourn as thoſe that had no hope, 1 *Theſ.* iv. 13. Adoption includes the redemption of the body. *Romans* viii. 23.——*Iſaiah* xxvi. 19. *Thy dead men ſhall live, with my dead body ſhall they ariſe: awake, and ſing ye that dwell in the duſt; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs*, which makes herbs to ſpring and grow up. *But the earth ſhall caſt out the* wicked *dead*, the rephaim, as abortives.

See Pſalms xv. xvi. 9, &c. xvii. 15.——*when I awake* out of death. *Daniel* xii. 2. *Pſalms* xxiii. 6. xxiv. 3, 4, 5. *Eccl.* iii. 16, 17. xii. 13. *Iſaiah* xxv. 8. li. 6.

Theſe inſtances may ſatisfy, that, although life and immortality are brought into the fulleſt light by the Goſpel, a future ſtate was not un-

known from the begining to the coming of *Chriſt*. We may therefore take it for a good rule, that the words, *life* and *ſalvation*, in the Old Teſtament, may be underſtood of a *future life and ſalvation*, when the context will admit of ſuch an interpretation.

We have found, that in the Patriarchal Age, among the nations, before the Jewiſh peculiarity, there were perſons eminent for religion and virtue, who worſhiped the living God, and enjoyed extraordinary communications from him; but that many were of a different character, wicked and ungodly men; and that idolatry, captivating the minds of the ignorant, weak, and vicious, ſpread ſo faſt, that it threatened the total extinction of good morals, and of the knowledge and pure worſhip of God. How the Father of mankind counteracted this new inſtance of degeneracy we ſhall ſee, when we have ſetled the Scripture-Chronology, and conſidered the judgment of God upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*.

CHAP. XXV.

The SCRIPTURE-CHRONOLOGY *from the* DELUGE *to the* EXODUS. *The Wickedneſs and Ruin of* SODOM, *&c.* 857 *Years.*

Year before Chriſt.	Year of the World.	Year of *Shem*'s Age.	Proofs.	Names of the Patriarchs, and their Ages, when they had Sons.	Years	
2346	1658	100	Gen. xi. 10.	Shem, after the Fl.	2	and begat
			——— 12.	Arphaxad lived	35	and begat
			——— 14.	Salah lived	30	and begat
			——— 16.	Heber lived	34	and begat
			——— 18.	Peleg lived	30	and begat
			——— 20.	Reu lived	32	and begat
			——— 22.	Serug lived	30	and begat
			——— 24.	Nahor lived	29	and begat
				Terah lived	130 *	and begat
1921	2083	525	—— xii. 4.	Abraham	75	when the Promiſe was made
		550	—— xxi. 5.	After that	25	and begat
			—— xxv. 26.	Iſaac lived	60 †	and begat
1706	2298		—— xlvii. 9.	Jacob aged	130	when he removed to *Egypt*.
1491	2513			Iſraelites continued there.	215	

* IN *Gen.* xi. 26. it is ſaid, *Terah* lived 70 years, and begat *Abram*, *Nahor*, and *Haran*. But *Terah* was 205 years old when he died in *Haran*, Gen. xi. 32. After *Terah*'s death, *Abram* left *Haran*; and then was he 75 years old, *Gen.* xii. 4. which being ſubtracted from 205, *Terah*'s age, gives 130, the year of *Terah*, when *Abram* was born.

† Add

† Add *Iſaac*'s age (60) when *Jacob* was born, to the years from the Deluge, and you will have 512, the year after the Deluge when *Jacob* was born. *Shem* was 98 years old at the Deluge, and lived 600 years, *Gen.* xi. 10, 11. Take 98 from 600 and there remains 502, the years *Shem* lived after the Deluge; which, deducted from 512, the year after the Deluge, in which *Jacob* was born, leaves ten years, the time between *Shem*'s death and *Jacob*'s birth. Hence it follows, that *Iſaac* lived with *Shem* 50, and that *Abram* lived with *Shem* 150 years. *Iſaac* alſo, who lived 180 years, (*Gen.* xxxv. 28.) lived 120 with *Jacob*, i. e. till within ten years of *Jacob*'s going down into *Egypt*. And as *Shem* lived with *Methuſelah* 98, and *Methuſela* with *Adam* 240, three perſons, *Methuſelah*, *Shem*, and *Iſaac*, might bring down the account of things from *Adam* till within ten years of the going down of the *Iſraelites into Egypt*. From the Deluge to the Promiſe was 427 years.

From the Promiſe to the time when *Jacob* and his family went down into *Egypt* was 215 years. And from the Promiſe to the time when the children of *Iſrael* came out of *Egypt* was 430 years. Compare *Exod.* xii. 41. with *Gal.* iii. 17. Therefore the time of their continuance in *Egypt* muſt be 215 years.

Joſeph was 30 years of age when preferred by *Pharoah*, Gen. xli. 46. After that there were ſeven years of plenty, and two of famine (*Gen.* xlv. 11.) before *Jacob* came down into *Egypt*. *Joſeph*, therefore, was then 39 years of age, after that he lived 71 years, for he lived in all 110 years, *Gen.* l. 22, 26. Take 71 out of 215, and there remains 144, the time the *Iſraelites* remained ſlaves in *Egypt* after *Joſeph*'s death. *Exod.* i. 8.

Before we come to the promiſe made to *Abraham*, which was the foundation ſtone of the grand ſcheme to preſerve religion and morals in the world, we muſt turn our thoughts a while to a particular diſpenſation, which God inflicted upon four cities, *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, *Admah* and *Zeboim*, (Gen. xiv. 2. Deut. xxix. 23.) that ſtood in a very extenſive, fruitful, and pleaſant vale, along the ſides of the river *Jordan*. Gen. xiii. 10. So far had idolatry, and the immorality which uſually attends it, infected the world, that theſe four populous cities, and *Zoar*, which lay not far from them, (*Gen.* xiv. 2. xix. 20.) were become exceſſively debauched and wicked, indulging to that vileſt ſort of lewdneſs, which is commonly called Sodomy, *going after ſtrange fleſh*, (Jude 7.) *the men burning in their luſt one towards another, men with men working that which is unſeemly*. Rom. i. 27.

Therefore God purpoſed to puniſh them with an exemplary and total deſtruction. *Abraham*, in the benevolence of his ſoul, interceded for their preſervation. *Gen.* xviii. 23. And ſuch is the mercy of God, ſo great his regard to virtuous characters, and ſo ready for their ſakes to beſtow bleſſings, even upon the unworthy, that he would have ſpared them, if but ten truly ſober and virtuous perſons could have been found in all thoſe five cities; but they were univerſally and irreclaimably corrupt. Therefore, ſparing *Zoar* for *Lot*'s ſake, (*Gen.* xix. 20, 21.) he deſtroyed the other four cities, with all their inhabitants, by pouring upon them the moſt dreadful ſtorm of fire and brimſtone from heaven; and alſo, probably, by a terrible earthquake, that broke up the very ſoil of the earth,

earth, and by an irruption of bituminous waters, which turned the whole vale into one heavy, fetid, and unwholſome lake, called the *dead*, or *ſalt ſea*, about 30 miles long, and 10 miles broad, *Gen.* xix. 24, 25, which remains unto this day.

This dreadful inſtance of Divine Vengeance, through the mercy of God, removed the bad examples of thoſe daring ſinners, had a natural fitneſs to awaken and reform the ſurviving impious, and was very properly intended to remain a perpetual monument of the wrath of God upon the wickedneſs of mankind. 2 *Pet.* ii. 6. *Jude* ver. 7. *Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.* Note——the fire was *eternal*, as it totally and for ever deſtroyed thoſe cities never to be built again. God thus *revealed his* future *wrath from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men.* And though there be no preſent appearances of it, we ſhould not therefore be ſecure. For, as our Lord obſerves, *Luke* xvii. 28. The *Sodomites did eat, they drank, they bought, they ſold, they planted, they builded*, thoughtleſs and ſecure; *but the ſame day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimſtone from heaven, and deſtroyed them all. Even thus ſhall it be in the day that the Son of Man is revealed.*

Gen. xix. 24. *The* Lord *rained fire and brimſtone from the* Lord *in heaven.* This is an Hebraiſm, where the noun itſelf is put inſtead of the perſonal pronoun.

Gen. xix. 26. *But his wife looked back from behind him, and ſhe became a pillar of ſalt.* Note——The ſulphureous ſtorm did not begin to fall upon *Sodom*, till *Lot* was ſafely arrived at *Zoar*, Gen. xix. 22. But his wife looked back before he reached *Zoar*; for ſhe *looked back from behind him*, as he was going to *Zoar*. Therefore, when ſhe looked back, *Sodom*, and the fine country about it, appeared in the ſame pleaſant and ſerene ſtate as ever. Conſequently, ſhe looked with a look of affection to the place, and of regret to leave it, and their goods that were in it, according to the import of the verb נבט ——This implied unbelief and diſtruſt of what the angels had affirmed, that God would immediately deſtroy the place. She did not believe, or ſhe did not regard it; ſhe ſtopt by the way, and left her huſband to go by himſelf; ſhe would go no further, and might be at a conſiderable diſtance from *Zoar*, and ſo near to *Sodom*, as, probably, to be involved in the terrible ſhower, and thereby turned into a nitro-ſulphureous pillar. This gives the proper ſenſe and force of our Lord's admonition, *Luke* xvii. 32. *Remember Lot's wife.* Let the judgment of God upon her, warn you of the folly and danger of hankering after, and being lothe to part with ſmall and temporal things, when your life and happineſs, the greateſt and moſt laſting concerns, are at ſtake.

CHAP. XXVI.

CHAP. XXVI.

The State of Religion *in the World, when* God *made the Promiſe to* Abraham.

THOUGH we may be ſure, that our State of Trial hath been, from the begining of the world, perfectly well adjuſted, as to the proper ballance of means and temptations, for all the purpoſes of Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs, yet it is certain that the contagion of evil ſo far ſpread in the earlieſt ages, as, in proceſs of time, to threaten the total extinction of true Religion and good morals. This is evident in the caſe of the old world, where wickedneſs and impiety had, at length, and by degrees, infected the whole race of mankind, except *Noah*'s ſingle family. And in about 450 years after the deluge, idolatry and wickedneſs had ſpread and corrupted the world ſo far, that *Sodom* and four other cities, being univerſally debauched, were deſtroyed (one excepted for the reaſon already given) by a moſt tremendous judgment. The *Amorites*, and ſeveral other neighbouring nations, were then filling up the meaſure of their iniquity; (*Gen.* xv. 16, 19, 20, 21.) which in about 400 years after was quite full; and God, who might have deſtroyed them, as he did *Sodom*, &c. gave the *Iſraelites* a commiſſion to expel, or extirpate them.

This ſpreading corruption, after the deluge, is not to be aſſigned to ſimple irreligion, but to religion directed to wrong objects and purpoſes. While men retained the knowledge of the true God, they cared not to glorify him by the practice of virtue and holineſs, nor were thankful for his benefits. *Rom.* i. 21, 22. And artful men, through pride and wantonneſs, indulging to idle conceits and falſe reaſonings, involved their own underſtanding, and that of others, in the thickeſt clouds of error and deluſion. Probably, they repreſented the heavenly bodies, the ſun, moon, and ſtars, as illuſtrious intelligences, who, being ſo eminently exalted, muſt have the higheſt intereſt in the favour of God, the direction of human affairs, and the diſtribution of all temporal bleſſings; and therefore it would be ſufficient to all the purpoſes of religion, to ſecure their friendſhip, as mediators between God and them. Thus they might *be driven*, enticed, drawn in, to worſhip them, (*Deut.* iv. 19.) by ſuch impious rites as were invented by the folly and ignorance of the ſame ſophiſters, and adapted to the depraved minds of ſuch as liſtened to them. Thus they might be deceived into the practice of all manner of lewdneſs and vice. For the attributes of thoſe ſuppoſed deities, and benefactors of mankind, being feigned purely by human imagination, they would naturally be repreſented by men, who had their own intereſts and luſts to ſerve, in ſuch manner as beſt ſuited the corrupt taſte and inclinations of thoſe who were diſpoſed to follow them. If this was not the caſe at firſt, it may eaſily be conceived to have been ſo in proceſs of time, by after improvements upon the original ſcheme of idolatry. And by this method men would be lead to believe, they might be religious,

and

and gain health, long life, fruitful ſeaſons, plenty, proſperity, not only without the practice of virtue and holineſs, but, poſitively, by lewd and wicked practices; and thus religion would be turned into an encouragement to vice, and the principles of virtue and goodneſs would be extinguiſhed.

Whether they were ſeduced preciſely after this manner or not, the fact is certain, that their abominable idolatries were attended with abominable luſts and intemperance, 1 *Pet.* iv. 3. Add to this, that cunning men, who knew how to make their own advantage of the foibles of mankind, introduced into their minds notions of fate, deſtiny, fortune, chance, neceſſity, with many other deluſions. Hence aroſe profeſſors of the vileſt arts, pretending to look into futurity, to gratify malicious deſires, to ſecure good, and prevent bad luck to thoſe who conſulted them. *Deut.* xviii. 10. *Diviners, obſervers of times, inchanters, witches,* or ſuch as pretend to work upon the mind, or body, for evil purpoſes, by herbs or potions; *charmers, conſulters with a* pretended *familiar ſpirit, wizards, necromancers.* And ſo far were they infatuated, that they made their ſons and daughters to paſs through the fire, under the notion of ſacrifices to their idols; probably, to gain their bleſſing upon their children, and to make them healthy and fortunate. *Deut.* xii. 31. xviii. 10. *Lev.* xviii. 21. xx. 2. Thus their hope and truſt, and their regards were diverted from God and his Providence to vain idols and the vileſt impoſtors.

The neglect and abuſe of underſtanding, and the indulged irregular inclinations of the heart, were doubtleſs the ſpring and principal cauſe of this defection from God and virtue. But we may believe it was forwarded and compleated by the ſuggeſtions and inſtigations of the devil and his angels; *the Prince of the power of the Air, the Spirit* whom God permits *to work in the children of diſobedience,* (Epheſ. ii. 2.) and to *deceive the nations.* Rev. xx. 2, 3. For when men *receive not the love of the truth, that they may be ſaved, God* judicially *ſends them ſtrong deluſion, that they may believe a lie. That they may all be condemned, who believe not the truth, but have pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.* 2 Theſſ. ii. 9—12.

Thus we ſee how idolatry firſt began, and by what means it might, as it certainly did, ſpread in the world; and would have prevailed univerſally, as the remaining virtuous dropt off, and as men of underſtanding happened to be drawn in by various allurements. For the heart even of *Solomon,* the great and wiſe, was, by the love of ſtrange women, ſo far turned away after idol-gods, that he built high-places and altars in honor of them, even in the neighbourhood of the city *Jeruſalem.* 1 Kin. xi. 1—8.

To prevent the univerſal prevalence of idolatry, and to preſerve among mankind the knowledge and worſhip of the living and true God, the wiſe and gracious Father of men was pleaſed to advance a new and noble ſcheme, which, under ſeveral variations and improvements, was to reach to the end of time. The ſcheme was this, to chooſe and adopt one family, afterwards to be formed into a nation, inſtructed in religious knowledge by God himſelf, and favored with ſuch extraordinary privileges, and honors, above all other nations of the earth, as were in their own nature adapted to ingage them, by the moſt rational motives, to adhere

to

to God and his worſhip. At the ſame time, to prevent their being infected with the idolatries and vices of the reſt of the world, as they certainly would have been, had they mingled with them, they were to be diſtinguiſhed and ſeparated from all other people by their diet, their dreſs, and divers civil and religious rites and ceremonies; but more particularly by a ſecret mark in the fleſh, by which they might be certainly known from all other men. Thus they would be kept together in a body, and hindered from mixing with, and being corrupted by, their idolatrous neighbours, and in every reſpect fited to be an example and inſtruction to them under the various diſpenſations wherewith they were viſited. And further, their laws and religious inſtitutions being originally recorded in *books*, would more certainly be preſerved and known in all future ages and generations. Thus God provided a ſtore-houſe of religious knowledge, a whole nation of prieſts, *Exod.* xix. 6. a ſchool of inſtruction and wiſdom for all the world. Or the nation of *Iſraelites* may be conſidered as a piece of leaven which in proceſs of time was to leaven the whole lump or maſs of mankind.

Abraham, a perſon of the moſt eminent piety and virtue, was choſen to be the head and father of this nation; that, as he would always be held in great veneration among them, he might always ſhine before their eyes as an illuſtrious pattern of godlineſs.

The ground of this ſcheme, and of God's ſingular regards to *Abraham* and his poſterity, was the COVENANT OF GRACE, the PROMISE or grant of favors and bleſſings to mankind in *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord. *Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world*, though *not manifeſted till the laſt times*. 1 Pet. i. 20. This Covenant or grant was firſt publiſhed to *Adam*. Gen. iii. 15. *Her*, the woman's, *ſeed ſhall bruiſe thy head*, O ſerpent, *and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel*. Nor could it be wholly unknown to the Patriarchs; but it was much more clearly revealed to *Abraham*. Gen. xii. 3. xvii. 7. xviii. 18. xxii. 16, 17, 18. And this is the ſubject which now requires our particular attention. [See the Treatiſe *on the Covenant of Grace*, &c.]

CHAP. XXVII.

The Methods of DIVINE WISDOM *in raiſing up a new and religious* NATION.

TO return to the age in which *Abraham* lived. The deluſions of idolatry were ſo ſtrong, and the human underſtanding ſo weak, that all nations ſeem to have run into it at once and alike. And ſuch was the infatuating and ſpreading nature of the infection, that there was no rational proſpect of the reformation of any one of them. Violence could

could not be uſed, argument and reaſoning would have no effect, the moſt dreadful judgments were forgotten, or diſregarded *. The knowledge and worſhip of the one living and true God, the great principle of moral goodneſs, and of public and private happineſs, would have been totally loſt in the earth. But the Father and Governor of men provided a remedy. Inſtead of deſtroying all nations, as at the deluge, it was the merciful ſcheme of Divine Wiſdom to create, out of one pious and faithful perſon, *Abraham*, a new and religious nation, ſeparated from all the reſt, in order to aſcertain among them, and at length among all nations, right ſentiments of his Being, Perfections, and Providence. And it is greatly worth our while to obſerve the ſteps and Methods by which God was pleaſed to train them up for this purpoſe.

Firſt, *Abraham* is required to caſt himſelf wholly upon *God*'s Providence, by removing, at *God*'s command, from his own kindred and country, to an unknown diſtant land, which God would ſhew him; aſſuring him of his preſence and ſpecial bleſſing. *Geneſis* xii. 1, 2, 3. Thus *God* took him under his immediate care and protection. In this ſtrange land he wandered about as long as he lived, but *God* was with him every where. *God* appeared to him, and converſed with him frequently and familiarly. By extraordinary interpoſitions, and expreſs declarations from time to time *God* incouraged, directed, proſpered, guarded and provided for him. He became very rich, great, and honourable; but all was moſt viſibly the gift and operation of *God*. *God* gave him repeated aſſurances, that he would *make of* him *a great nation*, give his poſterity the whole land of *Canaan*, and that *in his ſeed all the nations of the earth ſhould be bleſſed*. But he was not to have a ſon, till the birth of that ſon was manifeſtly the extraordinary miraculous effect of Divine Power, and inſured the performance of the promiſes. What could be more ingaging than all theſe circumſtances? What more proper to excite in a man, duty, affection, and confidence towards God? The ſame encouragements, bleſſings, and promiſes are repeated to *Iſaac*, and afterwards to *Jacob*, and the ſame heavenly correſpondence is kept open with them during their lives. *Egypt*, then a plentiful country, of genius and learning, [*Acts* vii. 22.] the reſort of the curious and inquiſitive, was choſen to be the nurſery of this family. Thither was *Joſeph* firſt carried by a ſingular Providence, ſold for a ſlave, and moſt unjuſtly caſt into priſon, but only that *God* might ſhew himſelf in his enlargement. By means which *God* only could provide and direct, he was at once releaſed from a jail, and raiſed to almoſt regal honor and authority. And in high dignity and eſteem, and with aſtoniſhing ſucceſs, which none but *God* could give, in the moſt important affairs, he continued all the days of his life.

By him *God* predicted ſeven years of prodigious plenty in *Egypt*, and ſeven ſucceeding years of the moſt diſtreſſing famine in the land, and in all the adjacent countries. By this event, *Jacob*'s whole family, in all ſeventy two ſouls, were brought to reſide, with the great good will of the king, and of the whole nation, in *Goſhen*, the richeſt province in the

* Reckoning by the age of man, the world was 20 years old; for God called *Abraham* in the year of the world 2083.

the land of *Egypt*, Gen. xlvii. 6. where their ſituation, manners, and way of living would keep them ſeparate from their idolatrous neighbours. *Gen.* xliii. 32. xlvi. 34. Thus God, by a ſurpriſing train of events, introduced the family of *Abraham* into the nurſery, where they were to grow up into a nation. At length a prince aroſe, *who knew*, or regarded, *not Joſeph*, Exodus i. 8. Then they fell into a ſtate of ſlavery, and the ſevereſt oppreſſion and ſuffering, for about 140 years. But this was only to render the power of God more conſpicuous in their preſervation and deliverance. The more they are oppreſſed, and the more cruelly they were uſed, the more they increaſe and flouriſh, till they were numerous enough to be formed into a nation. Then *Moſes* was miraculouſly preſerved, educated by *Pharaoh*'s daughter in all the wiſdom of the *Egyptians*, and raiſed up to be their deliverer. And now the vials of Divine Wrath are poured out one after another upon *Egypt*. God made bare his arm, or gave the moſt ſignal and ſtriking demonſtrations of his Being and Power, infinitely ſuperior not only to all human ſtrength, but alſo to all the pretended Deities, in which the *Egyptians* truſted. *Exodus* xii. 12.

To this end (1.) the Divine Wiſdom permited, on this ſpecial occaſion, *Pharaoh*'s magicians, poſſibly by the miniſtry of evil ſpirits, or by extraordinary powers immediately communicated to the enchanters, to imitate ſome of the miracles which *Moſes* wrought, in order to diſplay more clearly his own Divine Power; and to convince both *Egyptians* and *Iſraelites* of the vanity of ſuch arts, by controling and defeating them, even when exerciſed in the higheſt degree. So a man was born blind, and *Lazarus* died, on purpoſe to give our Lord an opportunity of demonſtrating his power, and the truth of his miſſion. *John* ix. 3. xi. 4. And for that reaſon, an extraordinary power might be permited to evil ſpirits to poſſeſs the bodies of men, that our Saviour's dominion over the devil and his angels might be more evidently ſhewn. The inviſible world of ſpirits may undergo many variations, and be ſubject to different reſtraints and regulations in different ages, ſo as to interfere more or leſs, or not at all in human affairs. *Jortin.*

(2.) God hardened *Pharaoh*'s heart, by granting him reſpite from one plague after another, that he might multiply, and ſo render more conſpicuous, the demonſtrations of his Being and Supreme Dominion. And this is all that God did towards hardening *Pharaoh*'s heart. See *Exodus* viii. 15. ix. 34, 35, and verſe 15, 16. *For now*, ſaith the Lord, *I have ſtretched out my hand* [in the preceding plague of boils and blains,] *and I have ſmitten thee, and thy people, with the peſtilence, and* [by this plague] *thou mighteſt have been cut off from the earth. But in very deed for this cauſe I have raiſed thee up*, [I have reſtored thee to health, by removing the peſtilential boils,] that by reſpiting thy deſtruction, I may *ſhew in thee* more and greater proofs of my Almighty Power.

All the miracles, which God wrought in *Egypt*, were ſuch as muſt be ſeen and acknowledged to come from him alone, and not from any poſſible power of man, or from any natural accidents. This is true of all the ten plagues, but eſpecially of the laſt. The peſtilence, in ordinary caſes, ſweeps away multitudes promiſcuouſly, but when it ſingleth out only the firſt-born in every family, it muſt plainly appear to be a judg-

ment

ment immediately from the hand or direction of God; [*Exodus* xii. 29.] as it was to the *Iſraelites* a juſt retribution of the cruelty of the *Egyptians* in endeavouring to deſtroy all their male children. *Exodus* i. 16. [Note—In thoſe ages and circumſtances of the world, when men were not ſo capable of being convinced by abſtract reaſoning, and probably underſtood nothing of the perfections of God *a priori*, his ſupreme authority and omnipotence would be beſt demonſtrated by *facts*, which experimentally proved his uncontroled dominion over all other powers, and over univerſal Nature.] At laſt *Pharaoh* and his people give up the cauſe. God's ſuperior power is owned, becauſe ſo dreadfully experienced. The *Egyptians* urge them to depart, and to remove all objections that might hinder their departure, willingly give them the moſt precious and valuable of their poſſeſſions, [which, by the way, might be but equal payment for the labor of ſo great a multitude, for 140 years.] See *Exodus* xii. 33, &c. Verſe 35. *And the children of Iſrael*—וַיִּשְׁאֲלוּ *aſked of the Egyptians Jewels*, &c. i. e. aſked the *Egyptians* to give them jewels, &c. [שָׁאַל ſignifies to *aſk to give*, as well as to *lend*. Joſh. xv. 18, 19. xix. 50. *Jud.* v. 25. viii. 25, 26. *Pſal.* ii. 8. See Hebrew Engliſh Concordance.] Verſe 36. *So that they lent unto them*, &c. † So that they readily gave them, &c. הִשְׁאִילוּם in *Hiphkid* to make to aſk, i. e. to encourage, to gratify aſking by freely giving. [Note—— Upon the occaſion of the death of all the firſt-born among the *Egyptians*, and the departure of the *Iſraelites* out of *Egypt*, a commemorative feſtival, the *paſſover*, is inſtituted; an ordinance very proper for preſerving the perpetual memory of the power and goodneſs of God among the *Iſraelites*.]

The *Iſraelites* leave *Egypt*, in number no leſs than twenty four hundred thouſand, *Num.* i. 45, 46, and all Nature giveth way before them. A paſſage is open for them through the Red-ſea, which cloſes upon, and overwhelms *Pharaoh* and his purſuing army. Pillars of cloud and fire, alternately appearing in the air, direct their march. Bitter fountains are made ſweet. In a dry, thirſty, barren country they are ſupplied with water from the hard and flinty rock, and with food from the ſky for forty years together. With all the appearances of glory and dreadful majeſty, God, as their King and Sovereign, eſtabliſhed his Covenant, or entered into a ſolemn contract, with them in mount *Horeb*; chuſing them for *a peculiar treaſure above all people*, Exodus xix. 5, and ingaging himſelf to be their God and King, and to beſtow on them all national bleſſings upon condition they were obedient, adhered to his worſhip, and kept clear of idolatry, with which they had been tinctured in *Egypt*, (Lev. xvii. 7. Joſh. xxiv. 14. Ezek. xx. 8.) otherwiſe they might expect the ſevereſt judgments. *Deut.* xxix. 10, &c. At the ſame time he gave them a ſyſtem of laws and ſtatutes, moſt excellent in themſelves, fited to their preſent temper and circumſtances, as well as to the future intents and purpoſes of the Goſpel diſpenſation. Here God took up his reſidence among them in the tabernacle, afterwards in the temple, ſeting himſelf at the head of their affairs, and upon all important occaſions directing

directing them as an oracle. And all this to attach and unite this one nation to himſelf.

At length, through a train of very ſtriking miracles, (*Jordan* divided, the walls of *Jericho* thrown down) he brought them into the promiſed land, with a commiſſion to deſtroy all the inhabitants, the meaſure of whoſe iniquity was then full; and, who probably were more corrupt than any of their neighbours, and as deſerving of deſtruction as *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, for all the idolatrous, bruti{ſ}h, cruel, inceſtuous, and unnatural crimes, which univerſally prevailed amongſt them. Had the *Iſraelites* been mixed with the idolatrous *Canaanites* they would ſoon have loſt the knowledge of God, and been involved in all their corruptions; but being made the inſtruments of their deſtruction, this would give them the greater horror of thoſe crimes, which they knew (for *Moſes* had told them, *Deut.* ix. 4, 5.) were thus dreadfully avenged by their arms. Moreover, thus they would give themſelves a clear demonſtration, that idol-gods had no power to defend and preſerve their votaries. Therefore it was not unjuſt in God to command the deſtruction of the *Canaanites*, nor cruel in his ſervants to execute that command, (any more than it is to extirpate outlaws, and the worſt of criminals, by legal authority) but in the views of Divine Wiſdom, the propereſt way of extirpating them, conſidering the effects it would have upon the minds of the *Iſraelites*.

Here we may obſerve, (1.) That the *Iſraelites* made no claim to the land of *Canaan* in their own right. The right was in God, who gave it them. (2.) We may obſerve a good reaſon why the Divine Wiſdom erected this ſcheme for preſerving true religion, only in the one nation of the *Iſraelites*. Becauſe had he ſelected a pious perſon, and his family, as he ſelected *Abraham*, and his poſterity, out of every nation upon earth, then to make room for them, every nation upon earth muſt have been devoted to deſtruction, as the *Canaanites* were. But ſeeing the whole earth was not filled with violence, injuſtice, rapine and oppreſſion, God in much lenity and forbearance was pleaſed to *wink at*, or overlook, the ignorance and error of other nations, without puniſhing them as they deſerved, *Acts* xvii. 30; leaving them to the light of Nature, *Acts* xiv. 16, to feel, or grope after his exiſtence and perfections, *Acts* xvii. 26, 27; and to the dictates of conſcience, for their conduct in life; while he continued his providential care in giving the ſupplies of life, and viſiting them with ſuitable diſpenſations; and will, at laſt, judge them in perfect equity, making allowance for all unavoidable defects. *Rom.* ii. 6, 10, 11, 12.

Even after the *Iſraelites* were ſetled in the land, the danger of idolatry was not over. They were ready on every occaſion to catch the infection from their neighbours; and ſtill there was need of further Divine Interpoſitions. And through a long courſe of years they were exerciſed with various diſpenſations, according as they did or did not adhere to the worſhip of God. When they clave unto the Lord, they were proſperous and triumphant; when they forſook him, and followed ſtrange gods, they were in great diſtreſs, in ſervitude, and captivity; till by repeated calamities, and ſignal deliverances, accompanied with the clearer light, and more rational convictions, which, at length, they were pre-

pared to receive from their prophets, they were at laſt weaned from idolatry, after the Babyloniſh captivity, about 955 years after their return out of *Egypt*; and never relapſed into it again *.

All this was neceſſary, and in conſiſtence with human agency, and the gradual improvements of mankind; was the propereſt method to preſerve the knowledge of the true God in the world, not only in that ſingle nation, but in all the nations of the earth. For the diſpenſation among the *Jews*, like a piece of leaven, which leaveneth the whole maſs, was intended for the benefit of all mankind; as by this means they became examples and inſtructors, while they remained in their own country, to all their neighbours; and when in captivity, or diſperſion, as they carried with them the knowledge of God into the countries where they were diſperſed; till the nations ſhould, by this and other means of improvement, be prepared to receive the cleareſt revelation of the true God, and of eternal life by the *Meſſiah*. Which was the great end and deſign of the ſcheme, which we have been conſidering.

And now, the more a thinking man revolves in his mind this train of affairs, and ſees how one nation are led, ſtep by ſtep, as their capacities would admit, to a ſenſe of the pre-eminence and ſovereignty of the true God, in order to be ſet apart as the repoſitory of his ſacred laws and religion, till they and all mankind are fit for the reception of them in a more ſimple, clear, and extenſive form, under the Goſpel, the more he will confeſs and admire the ſignatures of wiſdom and goodneſs that appear through the whole and every part of the œconomy.

There is one thing deſerves particular attention, I mean, the ſpirit and behaviour of the *Iſraelites* in the wilderneſs. A very remarkable inſtance of the wretched effects of ſervitude upon the human ſoul. They had been ſlaves to the *Egyptians* for about 140 years; their ſpirits were debaſed, their judgments weak, their ſenſe of God and religion very low; they were very defective in attention, gratitude, generoſity; full of diſtruſt and uneaſy ſuſpicions; complaining and murmuring under the moſt aſtoniſhing diſplays of Divine Power and Goodneſs, as if ſtill under the frowns and ſcourges of their unjuſt taſk-maſters; could ſcarce raiſe their thoughts to proſpects the moſt pleaſing and joyous; knew not how to value the bleſſings of liberty; of a taſte ſo mean and illiberal, that the fleſh and fiſh, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, onions and garlick, and ſuch good doings in *Egypt*, weighed more with them than bread from heaven, and all the Divine aſſurances and demonſtrations, that they ſhould be raiſed to the nobleſt privileges, the higheſt honor and felicity, as a peculiar treaſure to God, above all people in the world. *Num.* xi. 4, 5, 6.

In ſhort, nothing would do; the ill qualities of ſlavery were engrained in their hearts; a groveling, thoughtleſs, ſturdy, daſtardly ſpirit fatigued the Divine Patience, counteracted and defeated all his wiſe and beneficent meaſures; they could not be worked up to that ſenſe of God, that

* Reckoning by the age of man, the world was then 34 years old; for the *Jews* returned from the *Babyloniſh* captivity about the year of the world 3468.

that eſteem of his higheſt favors, that gratitude and generous dutifulneſs, that magnanimity of ſpirit, which were neceſſary to their conquering and enjoying the promiſed land. And therefore the wiſdom of God determined, they ſhould not attempt the poſſeſſion of it, till that generation of ſlaves, namely, all above 20 years of age, were dead and buried. However, this did not lie out of the Divine plan. It ſerved a great purpoſe, namely, to warn that, and all future ages of the church, both *Jewiſh* and Chriſtian, that if they deſpiſe and abuſe the goodneſs of God, and the noble privileges and proſpects they enjoy, they ſhall forfeit the benefit of them. And the Apoſtle applieth it to this very important uſe, with great force and propriety, in the epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, chap. iii. ver. 15, to the end, and chap. iv. ver. 1—12.

Thus, for a general view of this noble ſcheme. The nature and excellency of it will ſtand in a ſtronger light, if we examine the particular privileges and honors confered upon this diſtinguiſhed nation, their tendency to promote piety and virtue, and the relation they bear to the ſtate of things under the Goſpel. For this part of the ſubject we muſt turn to my *Key to the Apoſtolic Writings.*

CHAP. XXVIII.

Of the Jewiſh RITUAL, *or Ceremonial* LAW.

WE muſt now turn back to the *Moſaic* Conſtitution; which conſiſted, 1. Of political and judicial Laws. For which conſult Mr. LOWMAN on *The Civil Government of the Hebrews.* 2. Of moral precepts, ſuch as the ten commandments. 3. Of Rites and Ceremonies, ſuch as circumciſion, ſacrifices, waſhings, purifications, the uſe of certain garments, &c. and divers Rites uſed by the prieſts in the tabernacle. For a particular account of which, conſult Mr. LOWMAN *on the Ritual of the Hebrew Worſhip.* I ſhall only obſerve in general, that the deſign of thoſe Ceremonies, juſtly explained, was to convey religious and moral inſtructions, as well as the expreſs precepts.

Hieroglyphics, *which repreſent the ſenſe of the mind, by outward figures, or actions*, were the firſt and moſt ancient literature. So the government of the world by Divine Providence, and its extraordinary interpoſition in favor of good men, is repreſented by a ladder ſtanding upon the earth, and reaching to heaven, with the angels aſcending and deſcending on it, to receive and execute orders from God above, who ruleth over all. *Gen.* xxviii. 12, 13. In the ſtyle of this *Hieroglyphic* our Lord ſpeaks, *John* i. 51. *Hereafter ſhall you ſee heaven open, and the angels of God aſcending and deſcending upon the Son of Man*, as upon *Jacob*; meaning you ſhall ſee an extraordinary Divine Interpoſition working in

my favor, by many miraculous operations. [Dr. BENSON] The exaltation of *Joſeph* above the reſt of the family, was repreſented by the Hieroglyphic of his ſheaf ſtanding upright, and the eleven ſheaves of his brothers ſtanding round about and bowing to it. As alſo of the ſun, moon, and eleven ſtars making obeyſance to him. *Gen.* xxxvii. 7, 9. The tribe of *Judah* is repreſented by a young lion; *Iſſachar* by a ſtrong aſs; *Dan* by a ſerpent lurking in the road; *Naphtali* by a hinde; *Joſeph* by a fruitful bough; *Benjamin* by a ravening wolf. *Gen.* xlix. 9, 14, &c. A *rod*, or ſtaff, as it is an inſtrument of ſtriking or beating down, is the Hieroglyphic of power exerted in conquering, puniſhing, ruling, *Iſaiah* x. 5, 24; and of dominion and authority, *Pſalm* cx. 2; and as ſuch, is continued to this day, under the name of a ſceptre. With ſuch a rod *Moſes* and *Aaron* appeared before *Pharaoh*, as hieroglyphically repreſenting the power and authority of God, in whoſe name they demanded the releaſe of the *Iſraelites*. Exod. vii. 15. And thus they appeared as men of learning, and acted agreably to the literature of the age. A *horn* repreſented temporal power and dominion. 1 *Sam.* ii. 10. 1 *Kin.* xxii. 11. *Pſal.* lxxxix. 24. A *yoke*, ſuch as ſlaves carried upon their ſhoulders, ſervitude, or bondage, *Gen.* xxvii. 37, 40. *Jer.* xxvii. 2, 6. xxviii. 10.

This may ſerve to explain the nature of hieroglyphics; a ſort of language the *Jews* were then accuſtomed to, being the learning of that age, which they would underſtand much better than abſtract reaſonings about moral truths and duties. We may therefore, on this account, well admit, that the Rites and Ceremonies of their religious inſtitution were hieroglyphic, and intended by external repreſentations to give them uſeful inſtructions in true religion and real goodneſs. If we conſult the Prophets and Apoſtles, who were well acquainted with their meaning, we ſhall find ſo much evidence of the moral and ſpiritual intention of ſo many, as may induce us to believe, this was the ſenſe and ſpirit of all the reſt.

They were enjoined various and frequent ablutions, or waſhings with water; the common uſe of which is to diſcharge the body from all dirt and filth, and to keep it clean. This was a very eaſy repreſentation of purity of mind, or of an heart purged from the filth of ſin. And ſo the Prophets underſtood it. *Pſal.* li. 2. *Waſh me from mine iniquity.* Ver. 7. *Waſh me, and I ſhall be clean.* Iſai. i. 16. *Waſh yourſelves, make yourſelves clean, put away the evil of your doings.*——*Ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well.* Jer. iv. 14. Acts xxii. 16. Heb. x. 22. Rev. i. 5. Anointing with oil, or ointment, by which the head was beautified, and the countenance exhilarated, had the ſignification of honor, joy, holineſs, and inſpiration, *Pſal.* xlv. 7. *Acts* x. 38. The prieſts officiated in garments of fine linen, *Exod.* xxxix. 27; meaning, that the prieſts ſhould *be clothed*, or have their ſouls adorned *with righteouſneſs*, Pſal. cxxxii. 9. *For the fine linen is the righteouſneſs of Saints.* Rev. xix. 8. Burning of incenſe, whoſe ſmoak riſeth up with a pleaſant ſmell, was an hieroglyphic repreſentation of acceptable prayer. *Pſal.* cxli. 2. *Luke* i. 10. *Rev.* viii. 3, 4. Circumciſion had relation to the heart and ſoul, or to the retrenching all inordinate affections and inclinations. *Lev.* xxvi. 41. *Deut.* x. 12—17. xxx. 6. *Jer.* iv. 4. *Rom.* ii. 29. The ſprinkling of blood,

and

and of the water of ſeparation (*Num.* xix. 13, 19.) was hieroglyphic, and had a moral ſignification. See *Heb.* ix. 13, 14. x. 22. xii. 24. 1 *Pet.* i. 2. And ſo had the muzzled mouth of the ox. *Deut.* xxv. 4. compared with 1 *Cor.* ix. 9, 10. 1 *Tim.* v. 17, 18.

Some may have indulged too much to imagination, and found more myſteries in the Hebrew Ritual than were really deſigned; but theſe inſtances, explained by authentic evidence, may convince us, that the whole had a rational and ſpiritual meaning. And as we are taught in the Goſpel every thing relating to virtue and religion in the plaineſt manner, we need not give ourſelves much trouble about diſcovering the meaning of the other Rites, which are not explained by Prophets and Apoſtles. Only the affair of ſacrifices is ſo often alluded to in the New Teſtament, and ſeems to have ſuch reſpect to the ſacrifice of our Lord, that it demands a more particular examination. [Turn to *the Scripture-Doctrine of Atonement.*]

CHAP. XXIX.

The SCRIPTURE-CHRONOLOGY *from the* EXODUS *to the Founding of* SOLOMON'S *Temple.*

THIS ſpace of time was 480 years; as appears from 1 *Kings* vi. 1. which is made out, in the beſt manner I have yet ſeen, as follows.

Years before Chriſt		Years	Proofs
1451	From the *Exodus* to the death of *Moſes*, and ſucceſſion of *Joſhua*.		
	Note—*Moſes* was 40 years old, when he fled out of *Egypt*, Acts vii. 23. He was 40 years with *Jethro*, Exod. vii. 7; and 40 years in the wilderneſs with the *Iſraelites*. Therefore, he was 120 when he died. *Deut.* xxxiv. 7.	40	*Exod.* vii. 7. *Acts* vii. 30.
1426	From the ſucceſſion of *Joſhua* to his death.		
	Note — After the death of *Joſhua* the *Iſraelites* fell into idolatry, *Judg.* ii. 7, &c. And in thoſe licentious	25	*Joſephus.*

Years before Christ		Years	Proofs
	times, about the year before Christ 1398, the events recorded in the xvii^th^ and xviii^th^ chapters of the book of *Judges*, by which idolatry was introduced into the tribe of *Ephraim*, and by that means propagated among the *Danites*, might happen. For it was in the times when *there was no king in Israel*. And in the same unhappy period fell out, most probably, the war of the eleven tribes against *Benjamin*, of which we read *Judg.* xix. xx. xxi. chapters. For *Phineas*, the son of *Eleazar*, (Josh. xxiv. 33. 1 Chron. vi. 4.) who after the death of *Joshua* succeeded his father, about the year before Christ 1402, was then high-priest, *Judg.* xx. 28. *And in those days* also *there was no king in Israel*, chap. xxi. 25. which shews it was in the same times with the preceding events.		
1391	From the death of *Joshua* to the bondage of East-*Israel* under *Cushan*.	35	*Judg.* iii. 8,
1383	To their deliverance by *Othniel*.	8	. . 9, 10, 11,
1343	To the bondage of East-*Israel* under *Eglon* king of *Moab*.	40	. . 12, 13, 14,
1325	To their deliverance by *Ehud*.	18	. . . 15—30.
	[After which, that part of *Israel* had rest for 80 years, *Judg.* iii. 30.] Note — It may probably be supposed, that scarce any of the judges ruled over the whole country of *Israel*, but some in one part, and some in another; so that, at the same time, there might be several judges in several parts of the land; and		

Years before Christ		Years	Proofs
	and peace and liberty in one part, when there was war and ſlavery in another. The eaſtern part, that had ſhaken off the yoke of *Moab*, had reſt 80 years; but, in the mean while, the *Philiſtines* invaded the weſtern parts, and were repulſed by *Shamgar*, Judg. iii. 31. Afterward *Jabin* afflicted the northern tribes, chap. iv. 2. while the eaſtern parts ſtill remained in peace. See Bp. PATRICK on *Judg.* xi. 26.		
1285	To the deliverance of North-*Iſrael* from *Jabin*, by *Deborah* and *Baruch*. [After which that part of the land had reſt 40 years. *Judg.* v. 31.]	40	Authority of Chronologers
1245	To the bondage of North and Eaſt-*Iſrael* under the *Midianites*, for 7 years. Note—In ſome of thoſe 7 years, probably, *Elimelech* removed into the land of *Moab*, by reaſon of the famine, occaſioned by the depredations of the *Midianites*, *Ruth* i. 1, 2. *Judg.* vi. 4.	40	*Judg.* vi. 1.
1238	To their deliverance by *Gideon*.	7	*Jud.* vi. 1, *&c.*
1199	To *Abimelech*'s uſurpation, 40 years, or 39 compleat.	39	. . . . viii. 28.
1196	To *Tola*, judge over North and Eaſt-*Iſrael*.	3	. . . . ix. 22.
1173	To *Jair*, judge over North and Eaſt-*Iſrael*.	23	. . . . x. 1, 2.
	Note —— While *Jair* was judge, North and Eaſt-*Iſrael* were in bondage to the *Ammonites* 18 years, *Judg.* x. 8. At the ſame time with *Jair*, *Eli* began to judge South and Weſt-*Iſrael* 40 years, 1 *Sam.* iv. 18; all which time that part of *Iſrael* was oppreſt by the *Philiſtines*,		

Years before Chriſt		Years	Proofs
	Judg. xiii. 1. In the firſt of thoſe 40 years of *Eli*, which was alſo the firſt year of *Jair*, *Samſon* might be born; who lived 40 years, and judged Weſt-*Iſrael*, (while *Eli* alſo was judge there, and while that part of the country was under the *Philiſtines*,) 20 years, *Judg.* xv. 20. [*Eli* judging in civil affairs; *Samſon* by harraſſing the *Philiſtines*. USHER.] About the 13th year of *Eli*, before *Chriſt* 1160, *Samuel* might be born.		
1152	From *Jair* to *Jephthah*, who delivered North and Eaſt-*Iſrael* from the *Ammonites*, 22, or 21 compleat years.	21	*Judg.* x. 3.
1147	From *Jephthah* to *Ibzan*, over North and Eaſt-*Iſrael*, ſix, or five compleat years.	5	. . . xii. 7.
1140	From *Ibzan* to his ſucceſſor *Elon*, in North and Eaſt-*Iſrael*.	7	. . . . . 9.
1135	About the fifth year of *Elon*, *Samuel* was publicly known to be a Prophet, 1 *Sam.* iii. 20. iv. 1. About the ſeventh of *Elon*, *Samſon* pulled down the temple, *Judg.* xvi. 30. and deſtroyed great numbers of the *Philiſtines*. USHER thinks, that this calamity might encourage the South and Weſt-*Iſraelites* to give them battle. 1 *Sam.* iv. 1, *&c.*		
1130	From *Elon* to *Abdon*, over North and Eaſt-*Iſrael*.	10	*Judg.* xii. 11.
1122	From *Abdon* to his ſucceſſor *Samuel*, who now was alſo judge over North and Eaſt-*Iſrael*, as he had been before over South and Weſt-*Iſrael*, 1 *Sam.* vii. 15, 16, 17. probably,		

Years before Christ		Years	Proofs
	17. probably, from the time that he was publicly known to be a Prophet.	8	*Judg.* xii. 14.
1094	From *Samuel* to king *Saul.*	28	Chronologers
1054	From *Saul* to *David.*	40	*Acts* xiii. 21.
1014	From *David* to *Solomon.*	40	1 *Kings* ii. 11.
	From *Solomon* to the founding of the temple, four, or three compleat years.	3	. . . . vi. 1.
	In all . . .	480	1 *Kings* vi. 1.

CHAP. XXX.

Authors within the Period from the EXODUS *to the Founding of* SOLOMON'S *Temple.*

ABOUT the begining of this Period books began to be written; and it hath furnished the world with the noblest productions both in history, poetry, and the instructive kind.

The Book of JOB.

IF *Job* wrote his own book; or if it was written by *Elihu*, one of the interlocutors, as some gather from *chap.* xxxii. 10, 15, *&c.* where he speaks in the language of the writer of the Book; and if *Moses* found it when he was with *Jethro* in *Midian*, and transcribed it, adding the historical parts at the begining and the end; then this Book of *Job* is earlier than this Period, and the oldest Book in the world. And, as it is worthy of the highest antiquity, any of these suppositions is far more probable, than theirs, who imagine it was written in a later age, about the time of the *Babylonish* captivity.

The PENTATEUCH.

THAT *Moses* wrote the *Pentateuch*, or fivefold volume, (from πεντε, *quinque*, and τευχος, *volumen, liber*,) containing the five books in the Bible, we have the same reason to believe, as we have that *Homer* wrote the

the *Iliad*; namely, the conſent of all the learned in all ages. The firſt of theſe books is *Geneſis*, בראשית containing the only hiſtory of the world from the creation down to *Jacob*'s removing into *Egypt*, for 2298 years. 2. *Exodus*, שמות is the hiſtory of the departure of the *Iſraelites* out of *Egypt*, and of the erecting and furniſhing of the tabernacle. 3. *Leviticus*, ויקרא in which are the laws, ceremonies, and ſacrifices of the Jewiſh religion, and what particularly related to the *Levites*. 4. *Numbers*, במדבר begins with the numbering of the *Iſraelites*; after which ſeveral laws and remarkable events are recorded. 5. *Deuteronomy*, דברים is a repetition and an abridgement of the law, with exhortations and motives to the obſervance of it.

The Book of JOSHUA.

JOSHUA probably wrote the laſt chapter of *Deuteronomy*, and the Book of *Joſhua*, containing an account of his own acts, in conquering and dividing the land of *Canaan*; and *Phineas*, the high-prieſt, might add the five laſt verſes relating to the death of *Joſhua*, and of his father *Eleazar* the high-prieſt.

The Book of JUDGES,

WAS certainly written before the ſecond book of *Samuel*; compare 2 *Sam.* xi. 21. with *Judg.* ix. 53; and before *David* had taken *Jeruſalem*, 2 *Sam.* v. 6. *Judg.* i. 21. *Samuel*, the Prophet, or Seer, the laſt of the Judges, was an hiſtorian, 1 *Chron.* xxix. 29. and probably wrote this Book of *Judges*. In which we read the great efficacy of religion to make a nation happy, and the diſmal calamities which impiety brings along with it. *St. Paul* (*Heb.* xi. 32.) points out ſome examples of heroic, and ſurprizingly ſucceſsful faith in *Gideon*, *Barak*, *Samſon*, and *Jephthah*, whoſe hiſtory is recorded in this Book. It conſiſts of two parts, the one containing the hiſtory of the Judges, from *Othniel* to *Samuel*, which part ends with the xvi^th^ chapter; the other, containing ſeveral memorable actions, performed not long after the death of *Joſhua*, is thrown to the end of the Book, that it might not interrupt the thread of the hiſtory.

The Book of RUTH.

RUTH may be conſidered as an appendage to the book of *Judges*, and brings down the hiſtory to the times of *Samuel*, who probably was the author of it, and draws the lineage of *Judah* down to *David*. chap. iv. 18. Which makes it not unlikely, that it was written after *David* was anointed by *Samuel*. 1 Sam. xvi. 13.

Here it may not be improper to obſerve, that *Samuel* was not only an author, but otherwiſe ſeems to have been a great promoter of literature and religion. We never read of the companies, or colleges of Prophets

till

till this time, and therefore, probably, he erected them. They were ſeminaries for the inſtruction of youth in the knowledge of the law, and for training them up in the exerciſes of piety; particularly in the ſinging of ſacred hymns, in concert with inſtrumental muſic. This in the language of thoſe times, was propheſying, 1 *Sam.* x. 5. 1 *Chron.* xxv. 1, 2, 3, 7. They were not, ſtrictly ſpeaking, all of them *Prophets*; but upon ſome of them God beſtowed the ſpirit of prophecy, or of predicting future *events*, 2 Kings ii. 3. And we may ſuppoſe, that moſt of the Prophets, properly ſo called, came out of thoſe ſchools. *Amos* excepts himſelf, *chap.* vii. 14.——*I was no Prophet, neither was I a Prophet's ſon*, i. e. Diſciple; for the ſcholars were called, *the ſons of the Prophets*. At their head, as governor, they had ſome venerable truly inſpired Prophet, who was called their *father*. 1 *Sam.* x. 12. 2 *Kings* ii. 12. *Samuel* was one, and perhaps the firſt of thoſe *fathers*, or governors. 1 *Sam.* xix. 20. *Elijah* was another. 2 *Kings* ii. 12. And *Eliſha* ſucceeded him in this office. 2 *Kings* iv. 38. *Eliſha* came to *Gilgal*——*and the ſons of the Prophets were ſiting before him*. The maſter, or *father*, ſat above; and the ſcholars below, before him, *at his feet*. 2 Kings ii. 3. *Knoweſt thou that the Lord will take away thy maſter from thy head?* or from the ſeat, where he ſits above thy head——See *Acts* xxii. 3. They lived together in ſociety, 2 *Kings* vi. 1; and when they had done their lectures, and religious exerciſes, were wont to eat together with their maſters. 2 *Kings* iv. 38, *&c.* This inſtitution had a manifeſt tendency to advance religion and learning.

I. II. SAMUEL.

1 SAMUEL was wrote before 1 *Kings*. 1 *Kings* ii. 17. 1 *Sam.* ii. 31, 35, compared; and it is not unreaſonably ſuppoſed, that *Samuel* wrote the firſt 24 chapters; and that, after his death, the hiſtory of *David* was continued in the firſt and ſecond Books of *Samuel* by the Prophets *Gad* and *Nathan*. 1 Chron. xxix. 29.

I. II. KINGS.

THESE Books contain the hiſtory of the kings of *Judah* and *Iſrael*, from *Solomon* to the captivity in *Babylon*, for the ſpace of 423 years. In this Period were ſeveral hiſtoriographers; for we read of *the book of the Acts of Solomon*, 1 Kings xi. 41. which *Acts of Solomon* were recorded *in the Book of Nathan the Prophet, and in the Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the Viſions of Iddo the Seer*. 2 Chron. ix. 29. Which *Iddo* was imployed, together with *Shemaiah* the Prophet, in writing the Acts of *Rehoboam*. 2 Chron. xii. 15. We alſo read of the book of *Jehu*, the Prophet, relating the Acts of king *Jehoſhaphat*. 2 Chron. xx. 34. 1 *Kings* xvi. 1. And *Iſaiah*, the Prophet, wrote the Acts of king *Uzziah*, 2 Chron. xxvi. 22; and alſo of king *Hezekiah*, 2 Chron. xxxii. 32. And it is highly probable, that he wrote the hiſtory of the two intermediate

kings

kings *Jotham* and *Ahaz*, in whoſe reigns he lived. *Iſai.* i. 1. And, we may well ſuppoſe, all theſe hiſtories added one to another, make the two Books of *Kings*.

Note——No writer of the hiſtory of the kings of *Judah* or *Iſrael* is any where expreſly named, but his title is either given him as a Prophet, or it appears from ſome other part of Scripture that he was a Prophet. This quality of the writer was given to draw from us a proportionable reſpect, and make us receive the hiſtory with the reverence which is its due. The Prophets were the *Jewiſh* hiſtorians; therefore to the hiſtorical books, *Joſhua*, *Judges*, I. II. *Samuel*, I. II. *Kings*, they give the title of, נביאים ראשונים the *former Prophets*; as they give the title of, נביאים אחרונים the *latter Prophets*, to *Iſaiah*, *Jeremiah*, &c.

The Book of PSALMS,

WAS compoſed by ſeveral authors, but chiefly by king *David*. *Moſes* compoſed the xcth Pſalm, when God had ſhortened the lives of the *Iſraelites* in the wilderneſs, as a puniſhment for their unbelief. The cxxxviith Pſalm was indited ſoon after their tranſportation to the land of *Babylon*, and captivity there, and the cxxvith upon their return out of it. Others were made upon other occaſions; as may be ſeen in their titles, (although thoſe are not ſuppoſed to be of the ſame authority with the text) or collected from the ſenſe and ſcope of the Pſalm. For which Bp. PATRICK's Paraphraſe may be conſulted.

The Book of Pſalms is divided into five parts. The firſt reaches to the end of the xlist Pſalm; the ſecond to the end of the lxxiid Pſalm; the third to the end of the lxxxixth; the fourth to the end of the cvith; and the fifth part to the end of the whole.

It is a collection of divine odes, ſublime and elegant, far beyond all human compoſitions; conſiſting of the loftieſt celebrations of the Divine Praiſes, the moſt lively and fervent devotions of meditation, thankſgiving, prayer and ſupplication, faith, hope, and truſt in God in every condition, and the moſt excellent inſtructions in every branch of piety and virtue. And the frequent reading of it hath a ſtrong tendency to eſtabliſh in our minds the principles of true wiſdom, even every right diſpoſition towards God and man; and that purity of heart, and ſerenity of mind, which is a fund of comfort and joy in the ways of God, and will animate us to walk in them with ſteadineſs and delight.

Moſes was the firſt that compoſed ſacred hymns, that we read of, *Exod.* xv. *Deborah* the next, *Judg.* v. and then *Hannah*, 1 *Sam.* ii. But *David*, an admirable artiſt in muſick, (1 *Sam.* xvi. 18. *Amos* vi. 5.) carried divine poetry and pſalmody to its perfection; and therefore is called *the ſweet Pſalmiſt of Iſrael*. 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 1. He, doubtleſs by Divine Authority, appointed the ſinging of pſalms by a ſelect company of ſkilful perſons, in the ſolemn worſhip of the tabernacle, 1 *Chron.* vi. 31. xvi. 4——8. which *Solomon* continued in the temple, 2 *Chron.* v. 12, 13. And ſo did *Ezra*, as ſoon as the foundation of the ſecond temple was laid. *Ezra* iii. 10, 11. Hence the people became well acquainted with the ſongs of *Sion*, and having commited them to memory, were famous

for

for melodious ſinging among the neighbouring countries. *Pſal.* cxxxvii. 3. And the continuance of this branch of divine worſhip is confirmed by the practice of our Lord, and the inſtructions of the Apoſtle. *Mat.* xxvi. 30. *Mark* xiv. 26. *Epheſ.* v. 19. *Col.* iii. 16. See alſo *Rev.* v. 9. xiv. 1, 2, 3. Pſalm-ſinging is a part of Chriſtian worſhip, which ought to be ſupported, incouraged, and performed in the moſt ſkilful and harmonious manner.

Theſe are the books that were writen before the founding of *Solomon's* Temple.

CHAP. XXXI.

From the Founding of Solomon's *Temple, till the Deſtruction of it by* Nebuchadnezzar 423 *Years.*

Rules for calculating and adjuſting the Chronology of this Period.

THE Chronology is here carried on by the ſacred Hiſtorians in a double ſeries of ſucceeding kings; one in the kingdom of *Judah*, the other in the kingdom of *Iſrael*, the year of the reign of every king of *Judah* being mentioned, in which any king of *Iſrael* began his reign; and *vice verſa*. Therefore,

I. To be able to form a true judgment of the Chronology, it is neceſſary that we draw up two columns, one of the kings of *Judah*, and the other of the kings of *Iſrael*, in ſuch manner, that the years of their ſeveral reigns may be ſet exactly over againſt each other; together with the texts which prove the order of ſucceſſion, and the years of the ſeveral reigns. Thus the two columns will be a check upon each other; and the general rule will be,

II. So to adjuſt the correſponding numbers of years in both the columns, as that they may be reduced to a conſiſtency. Otherwiſe, the calculation cannot be juſt and true. Here lies the difficulty; and in order to ſurmount it ſome allowance muſt be made. As,

III. That Succeſſors may be ſuppoſed ſometimes to reign with their fathers, when the conſiſtency of the two liſts of kings cannot otherwiſe be made out. Thus it is certain, that *Solomon* was anointed king by order of his father *David*. 1 Kings i. 34. And *Jehoram* did begin to reign while his father *Jehoſhaphat* was alive. 2 *Kings* viii. 16.

IV. The years of reigns is delivered in full ſums, without taking notice of the odd parts of a year, either at the begining, or at the end of a reign. Therefore, to bring the two liſts to an agreement, it may reaſonably be ſuppoſed, that, for inſtance, 12 years, (or the 12th year) are put down, when only eleven compleat years are intended. So 2 *Kings* xviii. 9, 10, it is ſaid, that *Salmaneſer* laid ſiege to *Samaria* in the fourth year

year of *Hezekiah*'s reign, and, after a ſiege of three years, took it in the ſixth year of *Hezekiah*. Hence it appears, that the three years of the ſiege are not to be underſtood of three full years, but only of two ſuch years; the ſiege begining in the middle, ſuppoſe, of *Hezekiah*'s fourth year, continuing the whole fifth year, and ending in ſome part of the ſixth year. It is therefore plain that, according to the ſtyle of the ſacred hiſtorians, one whole year and two parts of two years, one before, and another after that year, may be called three years.

V. In a turbulent ſtate of things, an *inter-regnum* may be allowed, where conſiſtency cannot be preſerved without it.

VI. To find the year before Chriſt, (or before A. D.) in which any reign began, ſubtract the years of the preceding reign from that year before A. D. in which the preceding reign began. To find the year of the world, (or A. M.) ſubtract the year before A. D. from 4004, which is the A. M. in which our Lord was born, according to Arch-Biſhop USHER, who is generally followed by our Chronologers. Further, from 4714, the year of the *Julian Period*, correſponding to A. M. 4004, ſubtract the year before A. D. and it will give the year of the *Julian Period*. e. g. To know what year before A. D. *Jehoſhaphat* began to reign, ſubtract 41, the years of his father *Aſa*'s reign, from the year before A. D. 955, when *Aſa* began to reign, and the remainder will give 914, the year before A. D. when *Jehoſhaphat* began to reign. Subtract the year 914 from 4004, and it will give 3090 the A. M. of the ſame event. Subtract 914 from 4714, and it will give 3800, the year of the *Julian Period* when *Jehoſhaphat* began to reign.

From the Founding of SOLOMON's *Temple till the Deſtruction of it by* NEBUCHADNEZZAR 423 Years.

Yrs. bef. A. D.	*Yrs. of Reigns*	*Kings of JUDAH*	*Proofs.*	*Kings of ISRAEL*	*Yrs. of Reigns*	*Yrs. bef. A. D.*
1011	36	SOLOMON (*a*)	1 *Kin.* vi. 37, 38.			1011
975	17	REHOBOAM	—— xiv. 20, 21.	JEREBOAM I.	22	975
958	3	ABIJAM	—— xv. 2, 1.	18. (*b*)		958
955	41	ASA	—— xv. 10, 9.	20.		955
953		2	—— xv. 25.	NADAB (*c*)	1	953
952		3	—— xv. 28, 33.	BAASHA (*d*)	23	952
929		26	—— xvi. 8.	ELAH (*e*)	1	929
928		27	—— xvi. 10, 15,	ZIMRI	7 *days*	928
928		27 (*f*)	—— xvi. 23.	OMRI (*g*)	11	928

(*a*) *Solomon* laid the foundation of the Temple in the 4th year of his reign; and after that year he reigned 36 years.
(*b*) 17th Compleat.
(*c*) *Nadab* reigned two parts of 2 years, which together made 1 year.
(*d*) The latter part of *Baaſha*'s firſt year is laid to *Nadab*'s ſecond year.
(*e*) Part of two years, or one compleat.
(*f*) To preſerve a conſiſtency with the Chronology of the kings of *Iſrael*, we muſt ſuppoſe, that *Omri* reigned with *Tibni* 4 years, 1 *Kings* xvi. 21, 22, begining in the 27th year of *Aſa*: that after *Tibni*'s death he reigned alone 8 years, or 7 compleat, begining at the 31ſt year of *Aſa*. For ſo the text, 1 *Kings* xvi. 22, 23. may be read—*ſo Tibni died, and Omri reigned* alone *in the* 31ſt year of *Aſa king of Judah. Omri reigned* in all *twelve years: in Tirzah he reigned ſix years.*
(*g*) Eleven years compleat. When it is ſaid, that he reigned twelve years, part of a year is counted for a whole year.

Yrs. bef. A. D.	Yrs. of Reigns	Kings of JUDAH	Proofs	Kings of ISRAEL	Yrs. of Reigns	Yrs. bef. A. D.
917		38	1 *Kin.* xvi. 29.	AHAB (*b*)	20	917
914	25	JEHOSAPHAT	—— xxii. 42, 41.	4 (*i*)		914
910			—— xvii. 1.	[*Elijah* (*k*)]		910
904		[*Troy* taken (*l*)]				
897		17	—— xxii. 51.	AHAZIAH (*m*)	1	897
896		18	2 *Kin.* iii. 1.	JEHORAM (*n*)	11	896
896			[—— i. 17. ii. 1, &c. iii. 1.	*Elijah* translated, *Elisha* succeeds him.]		896
889	4	JEHORAM (*o*)	—— viii. 16.	5		
885	1	AHAZIAH	—— viii. 26, 25.	12 (*p*)		885
884	6	ATHALIAH	—— xi. 3.	JEHU	28	884
			—— x. 36.			
878	40	JOASH (*q*)	—— xii. 1.	7 (*r*)		878
870		[*Hesiod* and *Homer* *]				
856		22 (*s*)	—— xiii. 1.	JEHOAHAZ	17	856

(*b*) *Ahab* reigned but twenty years compleat. See the corresponding part of the opposite column.
(*i*) This was the third year compleat.
(*k*) About this time *Elijah*, the Prophet, appeared.
(*l*) According to Sir ISAAC NEWTON.
(*m*) *Ahaziah* reigned one year with his father, and one year alone.
(*n*) Or *Joram*, he reigned eleven years compleat.
(*o*) Or *Joram*. It is supposed he reigned four years with his father.
(*p*) Eleven years compleat.
(*q*) Or *Jehoash*.
(*r*) The fifth year compleat.
* According to Sir ISAAC NEWTON.
(*s*) Twenty-second compleat.

Yrs. bef. A. D.	Yrs. of Reigns	Kings of JUDAH	Proofs	Kings of ISRAEL	Yrs. of Reigns	Yrs. bef. A. D.
839	37 (t)		2 *Kin.* xiii. 10.	JEHOASH (u)	14	839
			—— xiii. 14.	[*Elisha* dieth.]		839
839	29	AMAZIAH	—— xiv. 2, 1.	2 (x)		839
825	15 (y)		—— xiv. 23.	JEROBOAM II.	41	825
812			—— xiv. 25.	[*Jonah* (z)]		812
810	52	AZARIAH (a)	—— xv. 2, 1.	27 (b)		
800		[*Joel* prophesied.]				

(t) The thirty seventh of *Joash* of *Judah* is the year in which *Joash* of *Israel* began to reign with his father; with whom he is supposed to reign two years. But those two years are not taken into the account, which must be reckoned from the fortieth, or thirty ninth year compleat, when *Joash* of *Israel* reigned alone.

(u) Or *Joash*. He reigned two years with his father, in all sixteen years.

(x) Those two years he reigned with his father; and therefore they are not taken in.

(y) Fourteen years compleat.

(z) *Jonah*, in his younger days, perhaps about twenty eight, might begin to prophesy about this time.

(a) Or *Uzziah*, 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 1. *Isai.* i. 1. vi. 1. *Amos* i. 1.

(b) *Amaziah* reigned twenty nine years, namely, fourteen years before *Jeroboam* II. began to reign, and fifteen years after he began to reign. How then could his son *Azariah*, or *Uzziah*, succeed him in the twenty seventh year of *Jeroboam* II, when *Jeroboam* had reigned but fifteen years when *Amaziah* died? *Ans.* If *Azariah* was sixteen, in the twenty seventh of *Jeroboam* (2 *Kings* xv. 2.) then he was born in the eleventh year of *Jeroboam*, and so was but a minor of four years old in the fifteenth of *Jeroboam*, when his father *Amaziah* died. It may therefore be supposed, that he was not inaugurated, or crowned king till twelve years after, when he was sixteen years of age in the twenty seventh of *Jeroboam*: the government in the mean while, being in the hands of a regency. But to preserve the truth of the Chronology, the twelve years of his minority are included in the fifty two years, which he is said to have reigned. Which twelve years are to be deducted out of the twenty seven of *Jeroboam*'s reign; and so he will be considered as succeeding his father in the fifteenth year of *Jeroboam*. Thus all will stand right. As the regency governed and tutored the young king exceeding well, the people were in no haste to have him crowned.

Yrs. bef. A. D.	Yrs of Reign	Kings of JUDAH	Proof.	Kings of ISRAEL	Yrs. of Reigns	Yrs. bef. A. D.
			[*Amos* i. 1.]	[*Amos* prophesied.]		787
			[*Hosea* i. 1.]	[*Hosea* prophesied.]		785
784				Interregnum	11	784
773	38 (c)	2 *Kin.* xv. 8.		ZECHARIAH	6 *months*	773
772			xv. 13.	SHALLUM	1 *month*	772
772	39		xv. 17.	MENAHEM	10	772
				[*Jonah* went to *Nineveh.* (d)]		770
761	50		xv. 23.	PEKAIAH	2	762
759	52		xv. 27.	PEKAH	20	760
758 (f)	16	[*Isaiah* (e) JOTHAM	*Isa.* i. 1. vi. 1.] 2 *Kin.* xv. 33, 32.		2	758
753		[*Micah* prophesied	*Micah* i. 1.]			
742	16	AHAZ	2 *Kin.* xvi. 2, 1.		17 (g)	742
						740

(c) Thirty seven compleat.

(d) About this time *Jonah*, advanced in years, might prophesy against *Nineveh*, in the reign of *Pul*, who soon after invaded the land of *Israel*, 2 *Kings* xv. 19; but it doth not appear, that he had any design to conquer it.

(e) About this time *Isaiah* began to prophesy, *Isai.* i. 1. and it is supposed, continued to the latter end of *Hezekiah*'s reign.

(f) This number is found by subtracting 52, the years of *Azariah*, or *Uzziah*'s reign, from 810, which is the year before Christ, when he began to reign.

(g) Sixteen compleat.

Yrs. bef. A. D.	Yrs. of Reign	Kings of JUDAH.	Proofs.	Kings of ISRAEL.	Yrs. of Reigns	Yrs. bef. A. D.
740			[1 *Chron.* v. 26. 2 *Kin.* xv. 29.	I. Captivity of Iſrael by *Tiglath.* P.]		
738				Interregnum	8	738
730	12	——	xvii. 1.	HOSEA	9	730
726	29 (*h*)	HEZEKIAH	xviii. 2, 1.		3	726
721	6 (*i*)	——	xviii. 9, &c.	II. Iſrael carried into captivity. (*k*)		721
720		[*Nahum* propheſied.]				720
698	55	MANASSEH	—— xxi. 1.			
677	22		[—— xvii. 24. *Ezra* iv. 2.	III. Captivity of Iſrael by *Eſarhaddon* *]		
643	2	AMON	2 *Kin.* xxi. 19.			
641	3	JOSIAH	—— xxii. 1.			
628		[*Jeremiah* begun. *Habakkuk, Zephaniah* (*l*)]	*Jer.* i. 2, 3. —— xxv. 3.			

(*h*) Twenty eight compleat.
(*i*) Five compleat.
(*k*) King *Hoſhea* and his people, the ten tribes were now carried into *Aſſyria* by *Shalmaneſer*, king of *Aſſyria*, who dwelt at *Nineveh*.
* See page 144. in the note.
(*l*) In this year *Jeremiah* began, and continued till the eleventh year of *Zedekiah*, *Jer.* i. 2, 3. *Habakkuk* and *Zephaniah* were probably cotemporaries with *Jeremiah*. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's Connect. at the year before A. D. 609.

Yrs. bef. A. D.	Yrs. of Reigns	Kings of JUDAH	Proofs	Kings of ISRAEL
610	3 months	JEHOAHAZ (*m*)	2 *Kin.* xxiii. 31.	
610	11	JEHOIAKIM (*n*)	—— xxiii. 36.	
606		[*Daniel* carried to Babylon. (*o*)]	*Dan.* i. 1, 6.	I. Captivity of JUDAH.
603		[*Daniel* interprets *Nebuchadnezzar*'s dream.	—— ii. 1.]	
599	3 months	JEHOIACHIN (*p*)	2 *Kin.* xxiv. 8.	
599		[*Mordecai* and *Ezekiel* captives.	*Esth.* ii. 5, 6. *Ezek.* i. 1, 2.	II. Captivity of JUDAH.
599	11	ZEDEKIAH	2 *Kin.* xxiv. 18.	
595		[*Ezekiel* had his first vision.	*Ezek.* i. 2.]	
588		The Temple was demolished.	2 *Kin.* xxv. 2, 9.	III. Captivity of JUDAH, and of the remains of *Israel.*
587	*Obadiah* prophesied against the *Edomites*, who cruelly assisted in the destruction of *Jerusalem.*			
569	*Nebuchadnezzar* distracted for 7 years together. *Dan.* iv.			
555	*Daniel* had his vision of the 4 empires. *Dan.* vii.			

(*m*) Or *Shallum.* (*n*) Or *Eliakim*, 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 4.
(*o*) Hence began the seventy years captivity, foretold by *Jeremiah*, chap. xxv. 1, 12. xxix. 10. *Dan.* ix. 2.
(*p*) Otherwise called *Coniah*, and *Jeconiah*. *Jer.* xxii. 24, &c. *Esth.* ii. 6.

Yrs. bef. A. D.

538 He interpreted the hand-writing on the wall. *Dan.* v. 25. and was caſt into the lion's den. *Dan.* vi.
536 *Cyrus* reſtores the Jews, and puts an end to their 70 years captivity. *Ezra* i. 1. See the year before A. D. 606.
Zerubbabel was then governor, and *Joſhua* high prieſt. *Ezra* iii. 2, 8. *Hag.* i. 1. *Zech.* iii. 1. iv. 6.
535 Jews begin to rebuild *Jeruſalem* and the Temple. The *Samaritans* obſtruct them. *Ezra* iii. 1, &c. iv. 1.
534 *Daniel*'s laſt viſion. *Dan.* x. 11, 12.
520 *Haggai* and *Zechariah* propheſy. *Ezra* v. 1. *Hag.* i. 1. *Zech.* i. 1.
515 The Temple rebuilt and dedicated. *Ezra* vi. 15, 16.
462 *Ahaſuerus*, alias *Artaxerxes*, divorces *Vaſhti*, and afterward marries *Eſther*. Eſth. i. 1, &c. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's Connect. at the year before A. D. 465.
458 *Ezra* ſent to be governor of *Judea* by *Artaxerxes*. *Ezra* vii.
453 *Haman* plots the deſtruction of the Jews. *Eſth.* iii. 11.
445 *Nehemiah* ſent governor to *Judea*, and rebuilds the walls of *Jeruſalem*. *Neh.* ii. 1, &c.
444 *Ezra* is ſuppoſed to publiſh his edition of the Holy Scriptures.
433 *Nehemiah* goes from *Jeruſalem* to the *Perſian* court. *Neh.* v. 14. xiii. 6.
429 About this time *Malachi* propheſied, according to Dr. PRIDEAUX's Con. 428.
428 *Nehemiah* comes again to *Jeruſalem* with a new commiſſion. *Neh.* xiii. 6.
404 *Socrates* flouriſhed.
296 *Simon* the Juſt, high-prieſt of the *Jews*.

I 3 CHAP.

CHAP. XXXII.

The moral Cauſes of the Babyloniſh Captivity; *and the Propriety of that Diſpenſation.*

THE whole *Jewiſh* nation, both *Judah* and *Iſrael*, had all along a ſtrong and ſtrange propenſity to idolatry, even after the erecting of the temple, and the eſtabliſhing of the worſhip of God there, in the moſt grand and ſolemn manner. They erected *altars to ſtrange gods*, frequented *high-places* and *groves* conſecrated to idolatrous worſhip, and furniſhed them with *idols* and *images* for that purpoſe. 2 *Chron.* xiv. 3. 1 *Kings* xv. 11, 12, 13. And their morals were juſt as corrupt as their religion, even to the degree of ſodomy itſelf. 1 *Kings* xv. 12.

What their peculiar temptations were, we know not. All the endeavours of good kings, and all the preaching of holy Prophets, ſent by ſpecial commiſſion from God, were ineffectual to produce a reformation. The pious king *Hezekiah* was zealous and active in rooting out idolatry; but *Manaſſeh*, his ſon and ſucceſſor, reſtored it again in the higheſt and moſt flagitious degree of profaneneſs and iniquity, even beyond that of the dark and ignorant nations. 2 *Kings* xxi. 1——10. *He built up again the high-places, which Hezekiah his father had deſtroyed*, &c. He was alſo a grievous perſecutor of all that would not conform to his idolatrous eſtabliſhments, and ſo *ſhed innocent blood* very much. *Amon*, his ſon followed his bad example. *Joſiah*, his grandſon, vigorouſly attempted a reformation. 2 *Kings* xxiii. 24, 25. But the people never came heartily into it. 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 14, &c. *All the chief of the prieſts, and the people tranſgreſſed very much, after all the abominations of the heathen, and polluted the houſe of the Lord, which he had hallowed in Jeruſalem. And the Lord God of their fathers ſent to them by his meſſengers, riſing up betimes, and ſending; becauſe he had compaſſion on his people, and on his dwelling-place; but they mocked the meſſengers of God, and deſpiſed his words, and miſuſed his Prophets, until the wrath of the Lord aroſe againſt his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who ſlew their young men with the ſword, in the houſe of their ſanctuary; and had no compaſſion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that ſtooped for age, he gave them all into his hand. And all the veſſels of the houſe of God, great and ſmall, and the treaſures of the houſe of the Lord, and the treaſures of the king, and of his princes; all theſe he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the houſe of God, and brake down the wall of Jeruſalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and deſtroyed all the goodly veſſels thereof. And them that eſcaped from the ſword, carried he away to Babylon; where they were ſervants to him and his ſons, until the reign of the kingdom of Perſia.*

Obſerve——This dreadful calamity came upon them gradually. Firſt, good king *Joſiah* was, in judgment upon the land, ſlain in battle by *Pharaoh-Necho*, 2 *Kings* xxiii. 29. who put *Jehoahaz* that ſucceeded him into chains, ſent him priſoner into *Egypt*, and put the land of *Judah* under a heavy

heavy tribute. 2 *Kings* xxiii. 33. *Jehoiakim* ſucceeded, a wicked prince like his predeceſſors. In his third year, *Nebuchadnezzar* took *Jeruſalem*, and carried away part of the veſſels of the houſe of God, and many of the people into captivity. Particularly, he gave order to *Aſhpenaz the maſter of his eunuchs*, that he ſhould make choice out of the children of the royal family, and of the nobility of the land, ſuch as he found to be of the faireſt countenance, and the quickeſt parts, to be carried to *Babylon*, and there made eunuchs in his palace, *Daniel* i. 1——4. whereby was fulfilled *Iſaiah*'s prediction above an hundred years before. *Iſaiah* xxxix. 7. Among theſe youths were *Daniel*, *Hananiah*, *Miſhael* and *Azariah*. *Dan.* i. 6, 7. Moreover the king was made a tributary, and the whole land reduced into vaſſalage under the *Babylonians*. A ſevere viſitation, but had not the proper effect upon *Jehoiachin*, the next king, who was as corrupt as his father. 2 *Kings* xxiv. 8, 9. He had been but three months on the throne, when *Nebuchadnezzar* again beſieged and took *Jeruſalem*, with the king and all the royal family; all the moſt valuable things in the temple, and in the king's treaſures, with all the mighty men of valor, all the crafts-men and ſmiths, he took away, leaving none in the land, but the pooreſt ſort. 2 *Kings* xxiv. 12, 13, 14. Among the reſt, *Ezekiel*, (chap. i. 1, 2.) and *Mordecai* (Eſth. ii. 5, 6.) were now carried captives. Yet ſtill there was no amendment of the religion or morals of the nation. *Zedekiah*, the next and laſt king, was as bad as his predeceſſors. 2 *Kin.* xxiv. 18, 19. And in about eleven years, *Nebuchadnezzar*, after a long and cloſe ſiege, took *Jeruſalem*, brake down its walls, burnt the city and temple, carried away all the ſacred utenſils, and all the people, except a few of the very pooreſt to till the ground, and reduced the whole land of *Judea*, in a manner, to utter deſolation for the ſins thereof.

The propriety of this diſpenſation will appear, if we reflect,

I. That the lenity of God appeared in bringing this terrible overthrow upon them ſo gradually, after a ſucceſſion of judgments from leſs to greater, for the ſpace of twenty-two years; which ſhould have been a warning to them, and by experience have convinced them, that the threatenings denounced by the Prophets would certainly be executed.

II. That it was a juſt puniſhment of their ſins; particularly of their idolatry, whereby they forſook God, and therefore God juſtly forſook them, and delivered them into the hands of their enemies, as *Moſes* had foretold. *Lev.* xxvi. 30——36.

III. This dreadful calamity was the moſt effectual means to work their reformation, which was the end propoſed by the Divine Wiſdom. Now, in their captive, diſconſolate ſtate, they had time, and their calamities had a natural tendency to give them a diſpoſition, to reflect upon the long ſeries of iniquity and perverſneſs, which had brought them under the heavieſt of God's judgments. Now *their own wickedneſs corrected them, and their backſlidings reproved them*; *now they* muſt *know and ſee, that it was an evil thing, and bitter, that they had forſaken the Lord their God, and that his fear had not been in them.* Iſaiah ii. 19. In the land of their Captivity the ſermons of the Prophets, declaiming with the higheſt authority againſt their profane and vicious practices, would be ſtill ſounding in their ears, and their abject, wretched condition, the conſequence of

ſuch practices, would ſink them deep into their hearts, and ſurely give them an utter deteſtation of what they very well knew was the cauſe of all their grievous ſufferings.

They had ſuffered themſelves to be ſhamefully infatuated by their falſe prophets, who had propheſied to them in *Baal*, as the moſt infallible oracle. *Jer.* ii. 8. They were prophets *of the deceit of their hearts*, xxiii. 26. They had encouraged a rabble of *diviners*, *dreamers*, *enchanters* and *ſorcerers*, who had moſt impudently impoſed upon their credulity, aſſuring them, in the name of the Lord too, that they ſhould not ſerve the king of *Babylon*, Jer. xxvii. 9. xxviii. 4. xxix. 8, 9; that he ſhould not come againſt them, nor againſt the land; xxxvii. 19. They *belied the Lord, and ſaid, it is not He, neither ſhall evil come upon us; neither ſhall we ſee ſword*, nor *famine*, Jer. v. 12. *but I will give you aſſured peace in this place.* xiv. 13. Thus they cauſed the people to err; and their kings, princes, and prieſts concurred to ſtrengthen the deluſion. *Jer.* ii. 26. v. 31. xxxii. 32. By the way, theſe prophets and prieſts were men of very wicked lives. *Zeph.* iii. 4. *Jer.* xxiii. 11. They *commited adultery, walked in lies, ſtrengthened the hands of evil doers*, and prevented their *returning from wickedneſs*, Jer. xxiii. 14; they perſecuted and murthered the juſt, in the midſt of *Jeruſalem*. *Lam.* iv. 13. From them *profaneneſs went forth into all the land*, Jer. xxiii. 15. which by their means was *become full of adulterers*, and *mourned becauſe of ſwearing*, verſe 10. See a more particular deſcription of the wickedneſs of the land, *Ezek.* xxii. 6—13.

But now, where were all their falſe prophets, with all their bold pretenſions, and flattering promiſes? The deluſion is now quite at an end, and they find themſelves moſt miſerably deceived. Their eyes are opened, and they are thoroughly convinced, they were a ſet of the vileſt impoſtors, who had deluded them into the moſt wretched circumſtances. *The prophets* were now *become wind*, Jer. v. 13, *an everlaſting reproach, a perpetual ſhame, which* could not *be forgotten*, xxiii. 40. And in proportion as theſe deceivers were deteſted, the true Prophets, who would have drawn them to juſt regards of God and his holy law, would be eſteemed and honored.

Doubtleſs the lying prophets and prieſts had filled their heads with ſpecious pretences for their idolatrous practices; and aſſured them, they were ſtill the beloved people of God, inveſted in all the diſtinguiſhing privileges of his church and peculiar people, and ſecure under his protection; with great oſtentation and confidence crying out, *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are theſe* [men or buildings] *Jer.* vii. 4. But now they found all their ſophiſtry to be lying words, and could no longer take aſſurance from their peculiar privileges, or their magnificent temple, when their temple and city were both deſtroyed, and themſelves caſt out into an heathen land, where they were ſo long, and ſo ſhamefully ſtript of all their peculiar honors. In ſhort, no method could have been deviſed more proper to give this people a fixed deteſtation of idolatry, and the vile arts by which they were ſeduced into it. And it had this effect. They never more fell into idolatry, but retain the greateſt abhorrence of it unto this day.

IV. The law of God, writen by *Moſes*, as the rule of their conduct in all affairs civil and religious, and the ground of their happineſs, they had

ſo

ſo far neglected, that once it was almoſt unknown and loſt among them. 2 *Kings* xxii. 8—12. This contempt of the divine law, the Prophets had frequently and ſtrongly proteſted againſt. (*Iſai.* v. 24. xxx. 9. *Jer.* vi. 19. viii. 8. ix. 13. *Hoſ.* viii. 12. *Amos* ii. 4. and in other places) and publicly declared, that it would be their ruin. And in their ruined ſtate, this muſt be remembered, as the primary reaſon of all their ſufferings; and they muſt be thoroughly ſenſible, that a due regard to the law of God, was the only way to recover his favor, and their own proſperity; and accordingly muſt be diſpoſed to be attentive to it. For *Ezra*, after the captivity, found ſo little difficulty in introducing the publick reading of the law, that the people themſelves called for it. *Neh.* viii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 18. xiii. 1. *Ezra* was a ready writer of the law of God, *Ezra* vii. 6, 10, 11, 12, and active in propagating the knowledge of it. Doubtleſs he wrote, or directed to be writen, ſeveral copies of the law, to be diſperſed into proper hands. And whereas before the Captivity they had no ſynagogues for publick worſhip or inſtruction, nor any places to reſort to for either, unleſs the temple at *Jeruſalem*, or the cities of the *Levites*, or to the Prophets, when God was pleaſed to ſend them; thus ignorance grew among the people; but after the Captivity ſynagogues were erected among them in every city, where the law was read every ſabbath, and other acts of devotion performed. This was the moſt effectual method of preſerving the knowledge of God and his law, and a ſenſe of their duty. This was another good effect of this diſpenſation, and may juſtly be given as one good reaſon of their being ſo ſtrongly fixed againſt idolatry, ever after the *Babyloniſh* Captivity.

V. This diſpenſation was alſo calculated to produce good effects among the nations, whither they were carried into Captivity. For wherever they were diſperſed in the eaſtern countries, they would bring with them the knowledge of the true God, now ſeriouſly impreſt upon their hearts. But Divine Providence, by ſuch ſignal circumſtances of his interpoſition, as were publiſhed and known over all the vaſt extent of the eaſtern empires, raiſed ſome of the captive *Jews* to the higheſt poſts of dignity and power in the courts of *Aſſyria* and *Perſia*. *Dan.* i. 19, 20. Inſomuch that the moſt haughty monarchs openly confeſſed the living and true God, as the only and ſupreme God. *Dan.* ii. 47, 48, 49. iv. 34, *&c.* And made decrees, that were publiſhed throughout their ſpacious dominions, in favor of the profeſſion and worſhip of him. *Dan.* iii. 29. vi. 25, *&c.* And the affair of queen *Eſther* and *Mordecai*, and the decree of the emperor *Ahaſuerus*, in favor of all the *Jews* in his empire, conſiſting of 127 provinces, muſt, not only give the *Jews* every where great diſtinction and honor, but alſo render the great God more known, and his religion more reſpectable; inſomuch that many of the people of the land, many of the *Perſians*, became *Jews*, or proſelytes to the Jewiſh religion. *Eſther* viii. 11, *&c.* And the great Cyrus was ſo well acquainted with the true God, that, as one of his firſt acts, after he was advanced to the empire of *Perſia*, he made a decree for the return of the *Jews* into their own country, and for the rebuilding the temple. *Ezra* i. 1—5. From all this it is clear, that the *Jews*, notwithſtanding their depravity in their own country, during the Captivity of 70 years, muſt have been a burning and a ſhining light, all over the eaſtern countries. And thus, in

this

this diſpenſation alſo, God, the Father and Governor of mankind, was working for the reformation and improvement of the world, in that which is the true excellency of their nature, and the only foundation of their happineſs.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Authors within the PERIOD *from the Building to the Deſtruction of the* TEMPLE.

LITERATURE in this Period received a conſiderable advance; probably, by means of the ſchools of the Prophets.

Solomon was a great Author, as he was endowed with an uncommon ſhare of wiſdom. For *he ſpake three thouſand proverbs, and his ſongs were a thouſand and five. And he ſpake of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyſſop that ſpringeth out of the wall; he ſpake alſo of beaſts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fiſhes.* But of all his works only three are taken into the Sacred Canon, namely, *Proverbs*, *Eccleſiaſtes*, and his *Song*.

PROVERBS.

THIS Book conſiſteth of the moſt uſeful rules for the right direction of life in religion and morals, and is the moſt authentic and excellent of the kind that can be produced in antiquity. It may be divided into five parts. I. In the firſt part the tutor give his pupil admonitions, directions, cautions, and excitements to the ſtudy of wiſdom. *Chap.* firſt to the tenth. II. The ſecond contains the Proverbs of *Solomon*, properly ſo called, delivered in diſtinct, independent, general ſentences. *Chap.* 10th to the 22d, *ver.* 17. III. The third part begins at *chap.* xxii. 17. where the tutor again addreſſeth himſelf to his pupil, and gives him freſh admonitions to the diligent ſtudy of wiſdom; which is followed by a ſett of inſtructions delivered in the imperative mood to the pupil, who is ſuppoſed all the while to be ſtanding before him. *Chap.* xxii. 17. to *chap.* xxv. IV. The fourth part is diſtinguiſhed by its being a collection of *Solomon*'s Proverbs, ſelected, we may ſuppoſe, out of a much greater number, by the men of *Hezekiah*; perhaps, by the Prophets *Iſaiah*, *Hoſea*, *Micah*, who all flouriſhed in the days of *Hezekiah*, and not improbably aſſiſted him in his pious endeavours to reſtore true religion. 2 *Chron.* xxxi. 20, 21. This part, as the ſecond, conſiſts chiefly of diſtinct, unconnected ſentences, and reacheth from *chap.* xxv. to *chap.* xxx. V. The fifth part contains a ſett of wiſe obſervations and inſtructions, which

Agur,

Agur, the ſon of *Jakeh*, delivered to his pupils, *Ithiel* and *Ucal*, chap. xxx. And the xxxi^st^ chapter contains the precepts which his mother, poſſibly a *Jewiſh* woman married to ſome neighbouring prince, delivered to *Lemuel*, her ſon; being paſſionately ſolicitous to guard him againſt vice, to eſtabliſh him in the principles of juſtice, and to have him married to a wife of the beſt qualities. Theſe two chapters are a kind of appendix to the Book of *Proverbs*. Note——It is uncertain who *Agur* and the mother of *Lemuel* were.

ECCLESIASTES.

This Book was writen by the *Preacher*, the ſon of *David*, *king* of *Jeruſalem*, chap. i. 1; that is to ſay, by *Solomon*, (probably in the latter part of his life) as appears from *chap.* i. 16. ii. 4, *&c.* The ſubject of it is, an enquiry into the chief good, or happineſs of man, in this world. And,

I. He confutes the falſe opinion of thoſe that place happineſs in human wiſdom, or philoſophy; in the pleaſures, amuſements, or ſplendor of life; in honor, magiſtracy, and dominion; in riches or wealth. This, in the ſix firſt chapters. II. He teaches, that true felicity is to be found only in a ſerious regard to God and religion, in the ſix laſt chapters. In both parts he intermixes ſeveral incidental reflections, which are of uſe to make us wiſe and pious. The whole is adapted to draw us from the inordinate purſuit of earthly things, and from a wrong to a lawful uſe of them; without any offence to God, or damage to ourſelves, till we arrive at a never-dying felicity.

The SONG of SOLOMON.

The *Song of Songs*, or the moſt excellent Song, was compoſed by *Solomon*; and is a noble *epithalamium*, or marriage-ſong, of the paſtoral kind, embelliſhed with the moſt grand and beautiful images. In the letter it is allowed to be a celebration of the marriage of *Solomon* to *Pharaoh*'s daughter; but the *Jewiſh* rabbies, and many of the Chriſtian fathers, have underſtood it as a ſpiritual allegory, repreſenting the love of God, or as Chriſtians ſay, of Chriſt, to his church; which, in other parts of Scripture, is repreſented as his ſpouſe, *Pſalm* xlv. 10, *&c. Hearken, O Daughter, and conſider*, &c. Ver. 13. *The king's daughter is all glorious within*, &c. Which Pſalm *David* is ſuppoſed to have made upon the ſame occaſion, namely, at *Solomon*'s marriage; wherein, as the bridegroom is juſtly ſuppoſed to be Chriſt, *ver.* 3——8. ſo his bride may well be ſuppoſed to be the church. *John* Baptiſt compares Chriſt to a bridegroom, *John* iii. 28, 29; and ſo doth our Lord himſelf, *Mat.* ix. 15. xxv. 1. and the kingdom of heaven he compares to a ſumptuous marriage-feaſt, *Mat.* xxii. 2. So alſo *Rev.* xix. 7. xxi. 2. the marriage of the Lamb to his bride, or wife, clothed in fine linen, (which doubtleſs repreſents the Chriſtian church in a ſtate of purity) is ſpoken of. And St. *Paul*, in ſtrong terms, ſuch as *Adam* uſed when he was married

ried to *Eve*, repreſents Chriſt as a huſband to the church. *Epheſ.* v. 25, &c. And ſo alſo, 2 *Cor.* xi. 2. *I have eſpouſed you to one huſband, that I may preſent you as a chaſte virgin to Chriſt.* And frequently in the Prophets God is ſet forth as the huſband or bridegroom to the church. *Iſai.* liv. 5. lxi. 10. lxii. 4, 5. *Jer.* iii. 20. xxxi. 32. *Hoſ.* ii. 2, 7, 16, 19. Hence, apoſtacy from God is very commonly repreſented as whoredom, and adultery, both in the Old and New Teſtament.

All this is very juſt, and ſupplieth very inſtructive and comfortable meditation. And it is certainly the beſt uſe we can make of this elegant Song to apply it thus to ſpiritual purpoſes. But the ideas, which the Scripture gives us of God's or Chriſt's relation to the church, as a huſband, are too general, to ſerve as a key to the great variety of particulars in this poem; which therefore, as it is never quoted in any other part of the Scripture, can be reduced to no certain rule of interpretation, but muſt be left to every perſon's fancy or imagination. Bp. PATRICK has done, perhaps, as much as can be done upon the ſpiritualizing ſcheme.

Within this Period were alſo writen the Prophecies of *Joel*, *Amos*, *Hoſea*, *Jonah*, *Iſaiah*, *Micah*, *Nahum*, *Jeremiah*, *Habakkuk*, *Zephaniah*, *Obadiah*. Theſe before the captivity. During the 70 years captivity, *Lamentations*, *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, *Eſther*. After the captivity, *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, *Haggai*, *Zechariah*, *Malachi*, I. and II. *Chronicles*. Theſe compleat the Canon of the Old Teſtament. And whereas it is of great uſe to the right underſtanding of the Prophets to know the reigns and times in which they propheſied, and the particular occaſions upon which any of them delivered their prophecies, I ſhall now attempt to digeſt and range them in chronological order, as follows.

CHAP. XXXIV.

PROPHETS *before the* CAPTIVITY.

ABOUT twenty-ſix years after the death of *Eliſha*, the Prophet, (2 *Kings* xiii. 20.) *Jonah the ſon of Amittai, the Prophet, which was of Gath-heper*, was ſent by God with a meſſage of encouragement and ſucceſs to *Jeroboam* II. king of *Iſrael*. 2 Kings xiv. 25. This might happen when *Jonah* was about 28 years of age.

JOEL i. ii. iii.

JOEL at *Jeruſalem* (Joel ii. 1, 15, 17.) might propheſy before *Amos* at *Samaria*, Amos i. 1. iv. 1. For *Amos*, chap. iv. 7, 9. may refer to the devaſtation

deſtation by *Palmer-worms*, &c. and drought, which *Joel* predicted, *chap.* i. 6, 7, 19, 20. However, as the ſenſe of this propheſy, in no part, that I know of, depends upon the time, when it was delivered, there can be no harm in ſuppoſing, that *Joel* propheſied about this time.

AMOS i——ix.

SOME time after *Joel*, *Amos* might begin to propheſy in the kingdom of *Iſrael*. Certainly he did propheſy in thoſe days of *Uzziah* or *Azariah* king of *Judah*, and of *Jeroboam* II. king of *Iſrael*, in which they were cotemporaries, *chap.* i. 1. How long he continued is not intimated. He had no regular education in the ſchools of the Prophets, (which ſuppoſeth that other Prophets had) but was originally a herdſman, and a *gatherer of ſycamore fruit*, or wild figs, *chap.* vii. 14. He had an expreſs commiſſion from God to propheſy unto his people *Iſrael*, ver. 15. This book may conſiſt of ſeveral diſtinct diſcourſes, but as they are without date, we cannot aſſign the particular times when they were delivered.

HOSEA i. ii. iii.

HOSEA is juſtly ſuppoſed to be cotemporary with *Amos*. He propheſied againſt the ten tribes, or the kingdom of *Iſrael*, begining in the reign of *Jeroboam* II. and propheſying in the reigns of *Uzziah*, *Jotham*, *Ahaz*, and *Hezekiah*, kings of *Judah*. He predicted the Captivity of the ten tribes; and as that Captivity happened in the ſixth year of *Hezekiah*, probably he lived to ſee it accompliſhed by *Shalmaneſer* king of *Aſſyria*; which was done about 64 years after the commencement of his prophetic office.

This Prophet is commanded to *take unto* him *a wife of whoredoms, and children of whoredoms*, chap. i, 2. This might all be tranſacted in a viſion, in the *council of God*. See the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of *Ezekiel*. Or it might be a parable, to be ſpoken as ſuch to the children of *Iſrael*. See *Ezek.* xxiv. 3, *&c.* Here that is ordered to be done as a fact, which was only to be ſpoken as a parable. But if the Prophet did really marry a lewd woman, who had children not by him, but by ſome other man, this was no ſin in him, who did it by Divine Command, in order to explain to the *Iſraelites* their wickedneſs, and the puniſhment of it. The adulterous wife repreſented the *Iſraelites*, who by their idolatries had gone a whoring from God, their own Huſband. The children, which this woman bare, are the ruinous effects of the idolatry of the children of *Iſrael*. The firſt baſtard was called *Jezreel*; and denoted the vengeance which God would take upon the houſe of *Jehu*, for the blood which he ſhed in *Jezreel*, chap. i. 4. The ſecond was called *Lo-ruhamah*, ver. 6. to denote, that God would no longer ſpare the houſe of *Iſrael*, but take them quite away out of their land. The name of the third was *Lo-ammi*, ver. 9. which ſignified, that the relation between God and the *Iſraelites* was diſſolved.

HOSEA iv.

THE *interregnum* in *Iſrael*, preceding the reign of *Zechariah*, was doubtleſs a time of very great diſorder and violence, and of much bloody ſtrife for the crown. Probably, *Zechariah* gained it by cutting off competitors. *Shallum* ſlew him, *Menahem* ſlew *Shallum*, and all within the ſpace of ſeven months. To this ſad ſtate of things *Hoſea* may well be ſuppoſed to refer, *chap.* iv. 2. *By ſwearing and lying, and killing and ſtealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth* [reacheth unto] *blood.* Here, therefore, we may place the fourth chapter of *Hoſea*.

JONAH i. ii. iii. iv.

JONAH, I ſuppoſe, about the ſecond year of *Menahem*, king of *Iſrael*, and about the 70th year of his age, was ſent to cry againſt *Nineveh*, about 700 miles from *Gath-heper*, then a great, wealthy, populous, and haughty city, the chief ſeat of the *Aſſyrian* empire, and the miſtreſs of the world; which had long been remarkable for luxury and jollity to a proverb, χρεισσων Νινευφραινομενης, *better than merry Nineveh*. By *Zephaniah* it is called, *the rejoicing*, or joyous, *city*, chap. ii. 15. To be ſent with a meſſage of divine wrath to ſuch a place as this could not but ſeem a frightful and dangerous errand to *Jonah*. He ſaw how much the *Iſraelites*, God's own people, hated and perſecuted the Prophets, who reproved and threatened them. What then could he expect from that great and wicked city, *Nineveh*, the head-quarters of pride and ſin? Further, he knew the Prophets very much hazarded their reputation in the world, when employed in denouncing judgments; becauſe God, being gracious, was ſlow in executing them. On this account, the Prophets at *Bethel* and *Jeruſalem* were vilely abuſed and decried by inſolent and rude infidels, who durſt even profeſs to *deſire*, or long for, *the day of the Lord*, (Amos v. 18.) in a confident perſuaſion, that it would never come; and dared to challenge God to haſten his work. *Iſai.* v. 19. See alſo *Jer.* xvii. 15. *Ezekiel* xii. 22. And if this ſhould be *Jonah*'s caſe at *Nineveh*, what could he expect but to be torn in pieces for an impoſtor? How muſt he, and the religion he profeſſed, be expoſed to publick contempt and ſcorn? This was what he particularly dreaded. *Chap.* iv. 2. He was therefore reſolved *to flee from the preſence of* [from before] *Jehovah*; that is, I ſuppoſe, to run away from the *Council* of God in the land of *Iſrael*, to ſome remote country beyond ſea *, where, he thought, it was never held. But he was ſtopt by a miracle, and at length obliged to deliver the doleful meſſage, *Yet forty days and* impenitent *Nineveh ſhall be overthrown.* Convinced of his miraculous miſſion, § the king proclaimed a faſt,

* Note—*Tarſhiſh* may ſignify any remote country beyond ſea, as the *Indies* now with us. See Root 1827. in the Eng. Heb. Concordance.

§ *Luke* xi. 30.

faſt, and enjoined all the uſual forms of repentance; *and God repented of the evil, which he had ſaid he would do unto them.*

It is very probable, that the idolatrous prieſts, and the aſtrologers, ſoothſayers, and magicians, who muſt be numerous at *Nineveh*, as well as at *Babylon*, (*Iſai.* xlvii. 13. *Dan.* ii. 2.) would zealouſly endeavour to divert the king, when the firſt fright was over, from attending to a meſſage from *Jehovah*, as ſoon as ever they poſſibly could, before the forty days were expired. They would naturally repreſent *Jonah* to the king and all the people, as an impoſtor; and bear them in hand that the prediction was falſe, and would not be fulfilled. This muſt give the Prophet, who was zealous for the glory of the God of *Iſrael*, very great uneaſineſs; inſomuch, that he wiſhed for death, *chap.* iv. 2, 3; as *Elijah*, in a caſe ſomewhat ſimilar, had done before him. 1 *Kings* xix. 4.

The queſtion of *Jehovah*, Jon. iv. 4. which we render, *Doſt thou well to be angry?* ſhould have been rendered, *Art thou very much grieved?* And ſo *ver.* 9. See *Heb. Eng. Concordance.* R. 748, 637.

Pul, the king of *Aſſyria*, who came againſt the land of *Iſrael* in the reign of *Menahem*, 2 Kings xv. 19. is ſuppoſed by Arch-Biſhop USHER to be the king of *Nineveh*, to whom *Jonah* was ſent. As it appears from the hiſtory, that *Pul* had no deſign to make conqueſt of the land of *Iſrael*, I can aſſign no reaſon, why he ſhould reach his arm over the kingdom of *Syria*, which lay to the extent of about 300 miles, between his dominions, and the land of *Canaan*, to ſtrike at *Iſrael*, but that he did it in revenge for the ſuppoſed inſult, which *Jonah* had offered to him and his people.

ISAIAH vi. ii. iii. iv. v.

ISAIAH, the brighteſt luminary of the *Jewiſh* church, juſtly called the evangelical Prophet, he ſpeaks ſo much, and ſo clearly of *Chriſt*, began to propheſy in the year king *Uzziah* died, *chap.* vi. 1. and propheſied in *Judah* in the ſucceſſive reigns of *Jotham*, *Ahaz*, and *Hezekiah*. He was certainly alive and propheſied when *Merodachbaladen* ſent his embaſſy to *Hezekiah*, who had been ſick, in the 14th year of *Hezekiah*, and before Chriſt 714. Thus we certainly know that he propheſied 46 years. There is an ancient and probable tradition among the *Jews*, that he ſuffered martyrdom under *Manaſſeh*, in the firſt year of his reign, before Chriſt 698, by being cruelly ſawn aſunder; to which the Apoſtle, *Heb.* xi. 37. is generally thought to have reſpect. And then he muſt have continued 61 years. See PIERCE upon *Heb.* xi. 37.

The firſt chapter, by reaſon of the grand exordium, might be judged proper to ſtand at the front of the book; but it gives ſuch an account of the diſtreſſed, deſolate condition of the land of *Judah*, as agrees much better with the wicked and afflicted reign of the apoſtate *Ahaz*, than with the flouriſhing circumſtances of the country in the reigns of *Uzziah*, and of his ſon and ſucceſſor *Jotham*, who were both, in the main, good princes. Compare *Iſai.* i. 7, 8, 9. with 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 1——16. and the whole 27th chapter. But the ſecond, third, fourth, and fifth chapters of this propheſy, do deſcribe, and exactly correſpond to, a ſtate of national wealth

wealth and proſperity, which are uſually attended with pride, arrogance, and luxury. See *chap.* ii. 6—18. iii. 16—25. v. 8, 11, 12.

Therefore, I take this to be the order of thoſe chapters. In the ſixth chapter, and in the year before Chriſt 759 the Prophet, in the council of God, received his commiſſion; and ſoon after delivered the contents of the ſecond, third, fourth, and fifth chapters. And theſe chapters contain all that remains of his prophecies in the reigns of *Uzziah* and *Jotham*, for about the ſpace of 16 years, till the firſt year of king *Ahaz*.

MICAH i. ii.

THESE two chapters were delivered before the deſtruction of *Samaria*, which is here predicted, *chap.* i. 6. in the reign of *Jotham*, chap. i. 1. And therefore may be rightly placed about this time.

ISAIAH vii.

IN the firſt year of *Ahaz* king of *Judah*, *Rezin* king of *Syria*, and *Pekah* king of *Iſrael*, formed a deſign of dethroning *Ahaz*, and of extirpating the family of *David*, by ſeting up the ſon of *Tabeal*, ſome potent, factious *Jew*, to be king of *Judah*. And therefore having no deſign upon the nation, but only upon the royal family, marched directly to *Jeruſalem*, and laid cloſe ſiege to it. But as it was the will of God, not to extirpate the family of *David*, but only to puniſh wicked *Ahaz*, he ſent *Iſaiah* to incourage him to make a vigorous defence, and to aſſure him they ſhould not prevail againſt him; and that the houſe of *David* ſhould ſubſiſt till the *Meſſiah* was born. Then was the prophecy delivered to *Ahaz* contained in the ſeventh chapter of *Iſaiah* *.

ISAIAH viii. ix. x. to the fifth Verſe.

AHAZ, a wicked idolater, paid little regard to what *Iſaiah* had ſpoken to him in the name of the Lord. Therefore God ordered *Iſaiah* to take a large

* ISAI. vii. 8. *Within 65 years Ephraim ſhall be broken, that it be not a people.* This was predicted in the firſt year of *Ahaz*. *Ahaz* reigned 16 years, and in the ſixth year of his ſucceſſor, *Hezekiah*, *Shalmaneſer took Samaria, and carried away Iſrael* [Ephraim] *unto Aſſyria*. This makes but 16 and 5, or 21 years. How then ſhall we make out 65 years? This has very much puzzled the critics. But obſerve, probably *Iſrael*, or *Ephraim*, was carried into captivity by the *Aſſyrians* three times. I. By *Tiglath-Pileſer*. 1 Chron. v. 26. 2 *Kings* xv. 29. II. By his ſon *Shalmaneſer*, 2 *Kings* xvii. 6. xviii. 10, 11. Thus *Ephraim* was no more a *kingdom*. III. Probably, by *Eſarhaddon*, who finally carried away all remains of the people; which is implied in his bringing new inhabitants from *Babylon*, *Cuthah*, &c. 2 *Kings* xvii. 24. *Ezra* iv. 2. Thus *Ephraim* was no more a *people*. This happened in the 22d year of *Manaſſeh* 65 years from the firſt of *Ahaz*. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 677.

a large roll of parchment, and therein, with the *pen of a man*, i. e. in the common and moſt legible way of writing, to put down and publiſh, what God ſhould further diſcover about the preſent deliverance and future calamities of *Judah*. The roll was to be a comment upon the name of a ſon, which was then born to the Prophet, and by Divine Direction was called *Maher-ſha-lal-haſh-baz*, i. e. *make ſpeed to the ſpoil, and haſten to the prey*. Denoting the ſpeedy deſtruction of the two confederate kings of *Samaria* and *Damaſcus*. This roll, I ſuppoſe, takes in the eighth and ninth chapters of *Iſaiah*, and the five firſt verſes of the 10th chapter.

ISAIAH xvii.

THIS chapter relates to the ſame ſubject, the deſtruction of *Iſrael* and *Damaſcus*; and therefore, I judge, it was delivered in the ſame year, after the roll was finiſhed. For in about two years after, *Tiglath-pileſer*, king of *Aſſyria*, took *Damaſcus*, and carried the people therein captive to *Kir*. 2 Kings xvi. 9.

ISAIAH i.

PEKAH and *Rezin* failing in their attempt upon *Jeruſalem*, (2 Kings xvi. 5. *Iſai*. vii. 1.) the next year, 741, they returned with forces better appointed, and councils better concerted; and dividing themſelves into three armies, one under *Pekah*, another under *Rezin*, and a third under *Zichri*, *a mighty man of Ephraim*, they fell upon the country in three different parts, making every where terrible havock and ſlaughter, and carrying away a prodigious number of captives. See 2 *Chron*. xxviii. 5—9. And no ſooner was the land freed from thoſe enemies, but it was invaded by the *Edomites*, on the ſouth, and the *Philiſtines*, on the weſt, who treated it with the ſame cruelty, ſlaying, plundering, and carrying away captives. 1 *Chron*. xxviii. 17, 18, 19. Thus was *Judah* grievouſly diſtreſſed all over the country, and brought exceeding low, which lately had been high in wealth and power, becauſe they and their king had forſaken the Lord their God. And upon this occaſion, moſt probably, *Iſaiah* delivered the prophetic ſermon, contained in the firſt chapter, as it is very ſuitable to the ſtate of the nation at that time.

ISAIAH xxviii.

THIS chapter, relating to the deſtruction of *Ephraim*, or the ten tribes, without any mention of *Syria* or *Damaſcus*, lieth between the deſtruction of *Damaſcus*, 740, and the captivity of the ten tribes, 721.

HOSEA v. vi.

AHAZ, greatly diſtreſſed by *Pekah*, *Rezin*, &c. called in *Tiglath-pileſer*, king of *Aſſyria*, to his help, 2 *Kings* xvi. 7. 2 *Chron*. xxviii. 16.

And *Menahem*, king of *Iſrael*, about 30 years before that, had hired *Pul*, king of *Aſſyria*, to confirm the kingdom in his hand, 2 *Kings* xv. 19; though they reaped no benefit from them. Theſe are the only times in which the kings of *Judah* and *Iſrael* applied to the *Aſſyrian* for aſſiſtance. And whereas *Hoſea*, chap. v. 13. mentions both thoſe applications, the fifth and ſixth chapters muſt be taken in after *Ahaz* had applied to *Tiglath-pileſer*.

ISAIAH xiv. 28, &c.

THE *Philiſtines* triumphed over *Iſrael* all the days of *Ahaz*. But in the year *Ahaz* died, *Iſaiah* delivered the *burden*, or meſſage, relating to them, *chap.* xiv. 28, &c. which was fulfilled by *Hezekiah*, ſon and ſucceſſor to *Ahaz*. 2 Kings xviii. 8.

ISAIAH xv. xvi.

THE *Moabites* had not uſed the *Iſraelites* well, who fled for ſhelter from the ravages of *Pekah* and *Rezin*. With this inhumanity they are ironically upbraided, *Iſai.* xvi. 3, 4. But now they are told, the oppreſſor and ſpoiler were ceaſed, and the throne of *Hezekiah* ſhould *be eſtabliſhed in mercy, and he ſhould ſit upon it in truth*, &c. Therefore, this prophecy againſt *Moab*, muſt have been delivered about the begining (perhaps in the ſecond year) of *Hezekiah*'s reign. And Dr. PRIDEAUX ſuppoſeth it was accompliſhed by *Shalmaneſer*, three or four years after, when, as he thinks, *Shalmaneſer*, previouſly to the ſiege of *Samaria*, ſubdued the *Moabites*, to prevent any incurſions, or attacks, from that quarter.

HOSEA vii—xiv.

THE prophecies in theſe chapters were delivered (1.) after *Ephraim*, or the king of *Iſrael*, had called to *Egypt* for ſuccour, *chap.* vii. 11. xii. 1. as *Menahem* had don before to *Aſſyria*. 2 Kings xv. 19. But the only time they applied to *Egypt* was, when king *Hoſhea*, revolting from *Shalmaneſer*, ſent meſſengers to *So* king of *Egypt*. 2 Kings xvii. 4. Which occaſioned *Shalmaneſer*'s beſieging of *Samaria*, and carrying the ten tribes into captivity. And therefore theſe chapters might be delivered about three years before that event. (2.) Theſe prophecies were delivered after the firſt year of *Shalman*, or *Shalmaneſer*, who, according to Dr. PRIDEAUX, began to reign in the year before Chriſt 728, or 729. For the Prophet *Hoſea* refers to the deſtruction of *Beth-arbel* by *Shalman*, chap. x. 14. And they were delivered before the taking of *Samaria*, which was in the 8th year of *Shalmaneſer*, before Chriſt 721; for the Prophet evidently, in thoſe chapters, ſuppoſeth, that *Ephraim*, or the ten tribes, were not yet carried into captivity. Therefore, they were delivered after the deſtruction of *Beth-arbel*, and before the captivity of the ten tribes, about the time above noted.

MICAH iii, iv, v, vi, vii.

THE laſt verſe of the third chapter of *Micah* was uttered in the time of *Hezekiah*, Jer. xxvi. 18; and here may both that chapter, and all that follow it be placed, as propheſied in ſome time of *Hezekiah*'s firſt 13 years, before *Sennacherib* beſieged *Jeruſalem*. For the Prophet ſeems to ſpeak of that ſiege and *Sennacherib*'s blaſphemy, chap. v. 1, 5. He ſpeaketh glorious things of *Chriſt* and his kingdom, and nameth the very town where he ſhould be born, chap. v. 2. In chapter iv. 1, 2, 3, he uſeth the very words of *Iſaiah*, chap. ii. 2, 3, 4, to expreſs the conflux to the kingdom of *Chriſt*, his power in it, and the peace which, at length, it ſhould give to the world.

NAHUM i, ii, iii.

AFTER *Shalmaneſer*, king of *Nineveh*, had taken *Samaria*, and carried the ten tribes captive, *Nahum* might predict the ruin of *Nineveh*, then the capital of the *Aſſyrian* empire.

ISAIAH xxiii.

SHALMANESER, having taken *Samaria*, turned his arms againſt the city of *Tyre*, which held out againſt him five years, and then was delivered from the ſiege by the death of *Shalmaneſer*. By this ſucceſs they were too much elated, and growing very inſolent, this occaſioned the prophecy againſt them in this chapter; which foretels the miſerable overthrow of *Tyre*, which was effected by *Nebuchadnezzar* king of *Babylon*. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con.* An. 715, 720.

ISAIAH xxiv, xxv, xxvi, xxvii.

THESE chapters may refer to the final deſolation of *Judea* and *Jeruſalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*. But I can diſcover no marks of the time when they were delivered. However, with the threatenings he mixes many gracious promiſes and comforts. See Dr. LIGHTFOOT.

ISAIAH xxxviii, xxxix.

IN this year king *Hezekiah* fell ſick, and the other affairs happened, which are recorded in this chapter. For 15 years are added to *Hezekiah*'s life, chap. xxxviii. 5. and as he reigned in all 29 years, this muſt have been the 14th year of his reign. And that it happened when the intentions of *Sennacherib*, king of *Aſſyria*, to attack *Jeruſalem* were known, appears from *Iſaiah* xxxviii. 6.

ISAIAH xxix, xxx, xxxi, xxxii, xxxiii, xxxiv, xxxv.

HEZEKIAH, having refuſed to pay the annual tribute to the king of *Aſſyria*, towards the end of the 14th year, *Sennacherib* coming upon him with a numerous army, he made all manner of preparation for a vigorous defence. 2 *Kings* xviii. 13. 2 *Chron.* xxxii. *Iſai.* xxxvi. Particularly, he entered into an alliance with the king of *Egypt* and *Ethiopia*. 2 *Kings* xviii. 21. *Iſai.* xxxvi. 6. This was a meaſure diſpleaſing to God, and therefore is proteſted againſt by his Prophet *Iſaiah* in the xxxth and xxxiſt chapters. And at the ſame time all the other chapters, from the xxixth to the xxxvith Chapter, eſpecially thoſe that have immediate reference to this invaſion, might have been dictated to the Prophet by the ſpirit of God.

ISAIAH xxii. Verſe 1 to 15.

As in this paragraph are manifeſt alluſions to *Sennacherib*'s invaſion and *Hezekiah*'s preparations for the defence of *Jeruſalem*, (compare verſe 9, 10, 11. 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 5, 30.) this prophetick admonition to the people, who depended too much upon theſe preparations, probably was delivered about this time. See LOWTH's Comment. on the place.

ISAIAH xxi.

THE inhabitants of *Kedar* were the deſcendents of *Iſhmael*, Gen. xxv. 13, and were one ſpecies of *Arabians* dwelling in *Arabia petræa*. Theſe were to be ruined within a year after this prophecy was given out. Moſt probably they were overthrown either by *Sennacherib* as he went into, or returned out of *Egypt*; or by *Tirhakah* king of *Ethiopia*, as he advanced out of *Egypt* againſt *Sennacherib*. 2 *Kin.* xix. 9. And therefore, this prophecy may be placed at this time, or within a year or two of it.

ISAIAH xx.

HEZEKIAH, having treated with *Sennacherib*, and agreed to pay him a ſum of money, 2 *Kings* xviii. 14, 15, 16, *Sennacherib* turned his arms againſt *Egypt*; which he greatly diſtreſſed for three years together, *Iſa.* xx. 3, 4. But firſt he ſent *Tartan*, one of his generals, before him to take *Aſhdod*, the key to *Egypt*. At this time the prophecy againſt *Egypt*, in the xxth chapter of *Iſaiah*, was delivered. Note—*Sennacherib* is, in ver. 1, called *Sargon*. Ver. 5. *They* the Jews, *ſhall be afraid and aſhamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory.*

ISAIAH xviii, xix.

THESE two chapters are alſo leveled againſt *Egypt* and *Ethiopia*, upon which the *Jews* relied too much; and therefore might be delivered about the ſame time.

ISAIAH x. ver. 5, &c. xi, xii, xiii, xiv. to ver. 28.

IT appears from chap. x. 8—12, which is a *proſopopoeia*, or ſuppoſed ſpeech of the king of *Aſſyria*, that this chapter was delivered after the taking of *Samaria* by *Salmaneſer*, 721; and ſome time before *Sennacherib* beſieged *Jeruſalem*, 710, who was the only king of *Aſſyria* that beſieged *Jeruſalem* after the taking of *Samaria*. And the ſpeech in this place bearing a near affinity to that of *Sennacherib*. 2 Kings xix. 10——14. *Iſaiah* xxxvii. 10—14, it is probable that this, and the other chapters, to the 28th verſe of the xivth chapter, were delivered about the time *Sennacherib* beſieged *Jeruſalem*. Note—In chapter x. 11, *Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria*, &c. *Sennacherib* ſpeaks as king of *Aſſyria*, and ſo takes in what his father *Shalmaneſer* had done, as if done by himſelf.

ISAIAH xxxvi, xxxvii.

SENNACHERIB returning out of *Egypt*, where he had been 3 years, notwithſtanding the agreement of peace, which he made with *Hezekiah*, marched his army again into *Judea*, laid ſiege to *Lachiſh*, and from thence ſent three of his generals with a proud and blaſphemous meſſage to *Jeruſalem*, 2 Kings xviii. 17, 18. 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 9, &c. This event, with the circumſtances which attended and followed it, are recorded in the xxxvith and xxxviith chapters of *Iſaiah*.

NOTE—Before *Sennacherib* laid ſiege to *Jeruſalem*, *Tirhakah*, king of *Ethiopia* advanced againſt him out of *Egypt*. 2 *Kings* xix. 9. But, as the Prophet *Iſaiah* had predicted, did the *Jews* no ſervice; for he was overthrown by *Sennacherib*, who after that returned to *Jeruſalem*, where his army being 185000 men, were all miraculouſly deſtroyed in one night. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con.* at the year 710.

ISAIAH xl, xli, xlii, xliii, &c. to the End of the Book.

As there is no direction to lay theſe chapters, or any of them, in any particular time, they may all be alloted to the eleven laſt years of *Hezekiah*'s prolonged life.

ISAIAH xxii. ver. 15 to the End.

SHEBNA had been ſecretary to king *Hezekiah*, and the good and pious *Eliakim*, the maſter of his houſhold, *Iſai.* xxxvi. 3. 22. *Shebna*, by the queſtions, chap. xxii. 16, ſeems to have been a foreigner, and not well affected to the Jewiſh religion. *What haſt thou* to do *here? and whom*, what relations *haſt thou here?* It is poſſible this *Shebna*, a man of great abilities, might have got the young king *Manaſſeh*, but 12 years old, and the whole management of affairs into his own hands; having routed *Eliakim* by ſuch arts as courtiers are wont to practiſe. For he was now both treaſurer, and maſter of the houſhold. To this, perhaps, the wicked conduct of *Manaſſeh* may be aſſigned. *Shebna*, ſecure of the ſtability and continuance of his power and grandeur, was hewing out a magnificent ſepulchre for himſelf and heirs, to perpetuate his memory to all ſucceeding times. On this occaſion, *Iſaiah* might publiſh this prophecy, predicting *Shebnah*'s captivity and death, in a remote foreign country, and the future exaltation of good *Eliakim*. This, which would greatly exaſperate *Shebna*, and might occaſion *Iſaiah*'s being put to a cruel death, [ſawn aſunder, *Heb.* xi. 37.] was fulfilled about twenty-two years after, when *Shebna* was taken captive with *Manaſſeh* by *Eſarhaddon*, and carried to *Babylon*, where *Shebna* continued all his life. But *Manaſſeh*, upon his repentance, was reſtored to the throne of *Judah*. And then, probably, good *Eliakim* was reſtored and intruſted with the management of all his affairs, and aſſiſted him in the great reformation he made in religion. 2 *Chron.* xxxiii. 11——17. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con.* Anno 677. *Manaſſeh* 22.

JEREMIAH i, ii.

IN this year *Jeremiah*, in the council of God, received his prophetic commiſſion, as in the firſt chapter. See alſo chap. xxv. 3. And in this year probably he publiſhed the admonitions, warnings, and threatenings, in the ſecond chapter.

JEREMIAH xi, verſe 1—18.

THE Prophet, ver. 2——9, moſt probably refers to the covenant, which *Joſiah* publickly made to keep God's commandments, upon finding the book of the law. 2 *Kings* xxii. 11. xxiii. 3. This was in the 18th year of king *Joſiah*. 2 *Kings* xxii. 3.

JEREMIAH iii, iv, v, vi, vii, viii, ix, x, xii, &c. to the xxi.

THESE chapters, for any thing that appears to the contrary, do lie in regular order, nor have we any ground or intimation for tranſpoſing any of

of them. There is a date, chap. iii. 6, *In the days of Joſiah*, without mentioning the year of his reign; which, however, ſhews, that that chapter was delivered in ſome part of his reign. And whereas a ſevere drought is frequently mentioned in ſeveral of theſe chapters, (*viz.* chap. iii. 3. v. 24, 25. viii. 13, 20. ix. 10, 12. xii. 4. xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4.) this ſhews, that they are to be laid together in the ſame year, or years, in which the drought continued; and all the reſt, to the xxiſt, may follow in order of time; and all might be delivered in the laſt years of king *Joſiah*. Dr. LIGHTFOOT.

JEREMIAH xi, ver. 18, to the end.

IN ſome part of the ſame years the men of *Anathoth* might conſpire againſt *Jeremiah*.

HABAKKUK i, ii, iii. ZEPHANIAH i, ii, iii.

AS theſe two Prophets propheſied the ſame things, that *Jeremiah* did, and upon the ſame occaſion, that is, deſtruction and deſolation upon *Judah* and *Jeruſalem*, becauſe of the many heinous ſins they were guilty of, they might propheſy about this time.

JEREMIAH xxii. ver. 1——24.

JEREMIAH being ſent of God to the king's houſe, there proclaimed God's judgment's againſt him and his family, contained in theſe verſes of this chapter. This was ſoon after *Jehoahaz*, or *Shallum*, was carried captive into *Egypt*, by *Pharaoh-necho*, king of *Egypt*, who ſlew *Joſiah*, ver. 10, 11. *Weep not for the dead*, Joſiah, *but weep ſore for him that goeth away*, Jehoahaz; *for he ſhall return no more*. Note——*Jehoahaz* reigned but 3 months.

JEREMIAH xxvi.

AFTER that, the Prophet was ordered to go to the temple, and to denounce to all the people the judgments of God, if they did not repent. By this he was brought in danger of his life, through the reſentment of the Prieſts and Prophets, *ver.* 7, 8; but was preſerved by the princes, *ver.* 16.

JEREMIAH xxv.

IN this chapter, and in the begining of this year, *Jeremiah* propheſied of the coming of *Nebuchadnezzar* againſt *Judah* and *Jeruſalem*.

JEREMIAH

JEREMIAH xxxv.

THE *Rechabites*, upon *Nebuchadnezzar*'s begining to invade the land of *Judea*, retired out of the country to *Jeruſalem*, where *Jeremiah* found them, in this chapter.

JEREMIAH xlvi.

IN the ſame year, after *Nebuchadnezzar* had defeated the army of *Pharaoh-necho*, this prophecy relating to the Gentiles, was delivered.

JEREMIAH xxxvi. ver. 1——9.

IN the ſame year God commanded *Jeremiah* to collect, and write in a roll, all the words of prophecy, which had been ſpoken by him againſt *Iſrael* and *Judah*, and againſt the nations. Which he executed by the aſſiſtance of *Baruch*, his *amanuenſis*; who, as *Jeremiah* was then under confinement, *ver.* 5, read the roll in the temple upon the faſting-day, *i. e.* the great day of atonement, being the 10th of the ſeventh month.

JEREMIAH xlv.

BARUCH being very much affrighted at the threats contained in the roll, and probably uneaſy under apprehenſions of the danger he might incur by reading it publicly, *Jeremiah*, by the command of God, delivered to him the meſſage of encouragement and comfort contained in this chapter.

DANIEL i.

IMMEDIATELY after this, *Nebuchadnezzar*, who ſet out upon his expedition the year before, laid ſiege to *Jeruſalem*, and took it; and bound *Jehoiakim* in fetters, with a deſign to carry him to *Babylon*. 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 6. But upon *Jehoiakim*'s ſubmiſſion, 2 *Kings* xxiv. 1, he did not carry him to *Babylon*, but reſtored him to the kingdom. Nevertheleſs, he carried great numbers of the people, and ſons of the royal family, and of the nobility, captives, among the reſt *Daniel*.

JEREMIAH xxxvi. verſe 9. to the end of the Chapter.

THIS year, after the *Chaldeans* were gone from *Jeruſalem*, *Jehoiakim*, and his people growing worſe and worſe, in the ninth month, at the faſt, which was then proclaimed, on account of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s having taken

ken the city the year before, *Baruch* again read the roll in the houſe of the Lord, *ver.* 9, 80. Which coming to the king's ear, and part of the roll being read to him, he, thinking perhaps, that *Nebuchadnezzar* had already executed the Divine threatenings, and nothing more was now to be feared, and that the Prophet was a malicious, troubleſome fellow, burnt the roll, and commanded *Jeremiah* and *Baruch* to be apprehended. But they could not be found, for the Lord hid them. Note—— *Jeremiah* was now at liberty.

DANIEL ii.

IN this year, which was the ſecond of *Nebuchadnezzar*, according to the *Babyloniſh* account, the 4th according to the *Jewiſh*, *Daniel* revealed to *Nebuchadnezzar* his dream.

JEREMIAH xxii. ver. 24, to the End.

IN this year this prophecy was declared againſt *Jehoiachin*, or *Coniah*, who reigned but 3 months, and then, with many others, was carried into captivity. 2 *Kings* xxiv. 11, &c. His uncle *Zedekiah* ſucceeded him. 2 *Kings* xxiv. 17.

JEREMIAH xxiii.

THIS chapter might be delivered at the ſame time with the foregoing prophecy.

JEREMIAH xiii. ver. 15, to the End.

BY the king and queen mentioned *ver.* 18, are probably meant *Jehoiachin* and his mother. See chap. xxii. 26. 2 *Kings* xxiv. 12. Thus, this prophecy muſt have been delivered about the ſame time with the foregoing.

JEREMIAH xxiv.

AFTER *Jehoiachin* or *Jeconiah* was carried into captivity by *Nebuchadnezzar*, this prophecy was delivered.

JEREMIAH xlix. verſe 34, to the End.

IN this year alſo is to be placed the prophecy againſt *Elam*, a kingdom upon the river *Ulai*, eaſtward beyond the *Tigris*, in which ſtood *Shuſhan*, afterward the metropolis of the kingdom of *Perſia*.

JEREMIAH

JEREMIAH xxix.

ABOUT the ſecond year of *Zedekiah*'s reign, *Jeremiah*'s letter, contained in this chapter, was ſent to the captive Jews at *Babylon*; and an impious anſwer returned by *Shemaiah*.

JEREMIAH xxx, xxxi.

THESE two chapters, which aſſure the captive Jews, that they ſhould not only return again to *Judea*, but alſo be the particular care of the Divine Providence to the end of the world, to ſhew the certainty of the incouraging contents, are ordered to be written in a book, chap. xxx. 2, about the ſame time with the foregoing letter, and probably were ſent to the captive Jews in *Babylon*, whom they principally reſpected.

JEREMIAH xxvii.

THIS chapter is to be placed in this year, (ſee chap. xxviii. 1.) namely, after the departure of *Nebuchadnezzar* out of *Judea* and *Syria*, when the kings of the *Ammonites*, *Moabites*, *Edomites*, *Zidonians*, *Tyrians*, &c. ſent an embaſſy to *Zedekiah*, propoſing to him a league againſt the king of *Babylon*. Note—In the firſt verſe, *Jehoiakim* is put for *Zedekiah*, [ſee ver. 3.] probably by a miſtake of the tranſcriber, who might then have his eye upon the firſt verſe of the foregoing chapter.

JEREMIAH xxviii.

IN this year the affair concerning *Hananiah* the falſe Prophet, related in this chapter was tranſacted. Note—The firſt verſe, according to the beſt commentators, ſhould be read thus, *When it had been ſo*, [i. e. when I had continued propheſying with a yoke upon my ſhoulders from that year, which was] *in the begining of the reign of Zedekiah, until the fourth year*, &c. See *Glaſs. Phil. ſacra Lib.* IV. *Tract.* I. *Obſerv.* V, *Pag.* 860. *Nold. Concord. Nota* 677, and LOWTH upon the place.

JEREMIAH l, li.

THESE two chapters contain a book of prophecies, which *Jeremiah* wrote, and ſent to *Babylon*, by *Seraiah*, who was ſent thither by *Zedekiah*, in the 4th year of his reign, chap. li. 59, &c. [*when he went with*, rather, *from Zedekiah*, &c.] See *Nold. Concord.* under אֵת or אֶת No. 1.

EZEKIEL

EZEKIEL i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, vii.

IN the 5th year of *Jehoiachin*'s captivity, which was alſo the 5th of *Zedekiah*'s reign, *Ezekiel*, a captive prieſt in *Chaldea*, received his prophetic commiſſion in the council of God, and had the revelations and prophecies contained in the ſeven firſt chapters of his book. Note—— *Ezekiel* dates his prophecies from the year in which himſelf and king *Jehoiachin* were carried into captivity.

EZEKIEL viii, ix, x, xi.

THIS year *Ezekiel* in a viſion was carried to *Jeruſalem*, ſhewn the ſeveral ſorts of idolatry practiſed there by the *Jews* in the very temple; and had revealed unto him the puniſhments which God would inflict upon them for thoſe abominations, and the divine protection of thoſe in captivity, who continued ſteady and faithful to his ſervice.

EZEKIEL xii, xiii, xiv, xv, xvi, xvii, xviii, xix.

ABOUT this time, *Zedekiah* having entered into a confederacy with the king of *Egypt*, and broken the ſolemn oath of fidelity, which he had ſworn to king *Nebuchadnezzar*, God, both by types and words of revelation, foreſhewed to *Ezekiel* the taking of *Jeruſalem* by the *Chaldeans*, *Zedekiah*'s flight by night, the puting out of his eyes, his impriſonment and death at *Babylon*, the carrying away of the *Jews*, and the remains of the *Iſraelites*, contained in the above-mentioned chapters. Note—— *Daniel*, though then but a young man, was grown to ſuch a pitch of piety and holineſs, as to be matched by God himſelf, with *Noah* and *Job*. Ezek. xiv. 14, 20.

EZEKIEL xx, xxi, xxii, xxiii.

THE elders of *Iſrael* came to *Ezekiel* to enquire of the Lord; but God refuſeth to be enquired of by ſuch wicked hypocrites; and in theſe four chapters denounces the judgments their abominable impieties deſerved.

JEREMIAH xxi, xxxiv. Ver. 1—8.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR having advanced a great army againſt *Judea*, 2 *Kin.* xxv. 1, to puniſh *Zedekiah* for his perjury and rebellion, *Zedekiah* firſt ſent *Paſhur* and *Zephaniah* to *Jeremiah*, to deſire him to enquire of the Lord; by whom *Jeremiah* returned the anſwer related in the 21ſt chapter.

chapter. Afterward, *Jeremiah* was ordered in perſon to deliver to *Zedekiah* the prediction contained in chap. xxiv. 1—8.

JEREMIAH xlvii.

PHARAOH-HOPHRA marching out of *Egypt* to the relief of his ally *Zedekiah* againſt *Nebuchadnezzar*, who was advancing to beſiege *Jeruſalem*, in his way took *Gaza*, a town of the Philiſtines. A little before this event, *Jeremiah* uttered this prophecy againſt the *Philiſtines*.

JEREMIAH xlviii, xlix, Ver. 1—34.

THESE prophecies, relating to the *Moabites*, *Ammonites*, *Edomites*, &c. who would be obnoxious to the ravages of the *Aſſyrian* armies, might be delivered at the ſame time with the former.

EZEKIEL xxiv, xxv.

ON the tenth day of the tenth month in the ſame year, when *Nebuchadnezzar*'s army had laid ſiege to *Jeruſalem*, the ſame was revealed, on the very ſame day, to *Ezekiel* in *Chaldea*; and the deſtruction of the city was typified by a boiling caldron; the ſame day alſo his wife died, as recorded in chap. xxiv. But vengeance is denounced againſt the neighbouring countries, that rejoiced in the preceding calamities, or ſhould rejoice in thoſe that were to come upon *Judea*. Chap. xxv.

JEREMIAH xxxvii. Ver. 1——11.

NOT long after *Nebuchadnezzar*'s army had laid ſiege to *Jeruſalem*, *Pharaoh-Hophra* came with a great force to the relief of *Zedekiah*. Upon which *Nebuchadnezzar* raiſed the ſiege of *Jeruſalem* in order to march againſt him. Upon which *Zedekiah* ſent a meſſage to *Jeremiah*, before he was put into priſon, chap. xxxvii. 4, the anſwer to which is contained in chap. xxxvii. 1——11.

JEREMIAH xxxiv. Ver. 8. to the End.

UPON the approach of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s army, the terrified Jews entered into a ſolemn covenant, to obſerve God's law, and to releaſe the Hebrew ſervants, which they kept in bondage contrary to his law. But when the *Chaldeans* were gone to meet *Pharaoh*, the general opinion being, that they would return no more, the Jews openly violated the covenant of reformation, by obliging all their ſervants to return to their former ſervitude. For which impious act, the Prophet *proclaimed liberty to the ſword*, &c.

JEREMIAH

JEREMIAH xxxvii. Ver. 11——16.

When the *Chaldeans* were gone to meet *Pharaoh*, *Jeremiah* was releaſed out of priſon; and intending to retire to *Anathoth*, from the calamities of the ſiege, which he knew would be renewed, was taken up for a deſerter as he was paſſing through the gate, and clapt in priſon; but principally for perſiſting, that the city ſhould again be beſieged and taken by *Nebuchadnezzar*.

JEREMIAH xxxii, xxxiii.

While *Jeremiah* was in priſon, the contents of theſe chapters were traſacted.

EZEKIEL xxix. Ver. 1——17. xxx.

Upon the approach of the *Chaldeans*, the *Egyptians* treacherouſly deſerted *Zedekiah*, and returned into their own country. Upon this occaſion, *Ezekiel* denounces the diſpleaſure of God againſt their perfidy, predicts their deſolation, and at length, (within 40 years, chap. xxix. 13.) their being reduced to one of the baſeſt of nations, inſomuch that they ſhould no more have a prince of their own to reign over them. Chap. xxx. 13. Which hath been remarkably fulfilled, even unto this day. See Dr. Prideaux's *Con. ad Annum* 589. *Zedekiah* 10.

JEREMIAH xxxvii. Ver. 17 to the End.

On the retreat of the *Egyptians*, *Nebuchadnezzar* returned to the ſiege of *Jeruſalem*; and it was then king *Zedekiah*, fearing the iſſue, ſent for *Jeremiah* out of priſon to conſult him.

JEREMIAH xxxviii. Ver. 1——14.

The princes, offended at *Jeremiah*, caſt him into a low, lothſome, miry dungeon, where he muſt have periſhed, had not *Ebed-melech* gained leave to draw him out, and to place him in a better ſituation in the court of the priſon.

JEREMIAH xxxix. Ver. 15 to the End.

While *Jeremiah* was in the court of the priſon, God by him ſent a meſſage of mercy and deliverance to *Ebed-melech*.

JEREMIAH

JEREMIAH xxxviii. Ver. 14 to the End.

ZEDEKIAH again ſent for *Jeremiah* out of the court of the priſon into the temple, there ſecretly to enquire of him about the iſſue of the ſiege.

EZEKIEL xxvi, xxvii, xxviii.

HERE God declares his judgments againſt *Tyre*, for inſulting the calamitous ſtate of *Jeruſalem*, cloſely beſieged by *Nebuchadnezzar*. Note—*Daniel*'s wiſdom, though but about 36, was become famous over all the Eaſt. *Chap.* xxviii. 3.

EZEKIEL xxxi.

GOD declares his judgments againſt *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians*.

JEREMIAH xxxix. Ver. 1——11. lii. Ver. 1——30.

THE account of *Jeruſalem*'s being taken, with the ſubſequent circumſtances. Upon this occaſion the 137th Pſalm was compoſed.

JEREMIAH xxxix. Ver. 11——15. xl. Ver. 1——7.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR giveth charge concerning *Jeremiah* to *Nebuzaradan*; who treateth him in a kind and friendly manner.

JEREMIAH xl. Ver. 7. to the End. xli, xlii, xliii. Ver. 1——8.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR makes *Gedaliah* governor of *Judea*. *Iſhmael* ſlays him. *Johanan*, &c. by force carry *Jeremiah* into *Egypt*.

CHAP. XXXV.

CHAP. XXXV.

PROPHETS *after the Deſtruction of the* TEMPLE, *during the* CAPTIVITY.

JEREMIAH xliii. Ver. 8. to the End. xliv.

THE Prophecies contained in theſe Chapters were revealed, and publiſhed to the *Jews*, in the land of *Egypt*.

The Book of LAMENTATIONS.

THIS Book, which mournfully bewails the deſolation of *Jeruſalem*, and the Temple, was compoſed by *Jeremiah* after that ſad event, poſſibly, in the land of *Egypt*; where *Jeremiah* might end his days; for we never hear of his return from thence.

EZEKIEL xxxiii.

THE begining of this chapter is upon a general ſubject, and of uncertain date. From the 21ſt verſe it is dated from the time, when *Ezekiel* firſt received the news of the city's being taken and deſtroyed, which was 18 months, or a year and a half, after the ſad event happened.

EZEKIEL xxxii.

THIS prophecy againſt *Egypt* was delivered in this year and month.

EZEKIEL xxxiv, xxxvi, xxxvii, xxxviii, xxxix.

THESE chapters fall under no date, till we come to the 40th chapter, which is dated the 25th of *Jehoiachin*'s captivity. Therefore, theſe chapters were probably delivered ſome time between the 12th and 25th of that captivity.

OBADIAH.

OBADIAH propheſied againſt the *Edomites* for their unnatural and ſpiteful behaviour towards the *Jews*, in their diſtreſs at the taking of *Jeruſalem*.

EZEKIEL

EZEKIEL xxxv.

THIS prophecy againſt the *Edomites* ſeems to have been delivered upon the ſame occaſion.

DANIEL iii.

IN this year alſo *Nebuchadnezzar* ſet up his golden image. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. Anno* 587. *Nebuchad.* 18.

EZEKIEL xl, xli, &c. to the End of the Book.

ALL theſe viſions and prophecies, relating to the future ſtate of the church of God, were revealed to *Ezekiel* this year, being the 14th from the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*.

EZEKIEL xxix. Ver. 17. to the End.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR's army having endured great hardſhips in the ſiege of *Tyre*, which held 13 years, and having got little on the taking of it, (the inhabitants having conveyed themſelves and their effects into the adjacent iſland) God, by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, promiſeth them the ſpoils of *Egypt*, as a reward for their labor. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 573. *Nebuchad.* 32.

DANIEL iv.

THIS year *Nebuchadnezzar* had his dream of the wonderful great tree, and the cuting down thereof, and the next year fell diſtracted. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 570.

JEREMIAH lii. Ver. 31. to the End.

THIS year *Nebuchadnezzar* dies, and is ſucceeded by his ſon, *Evil-merodach*, who releaſed *Jehoiachin*, king of *Judah*, out of priſon, where he had been confined 37 years, and advanced him to honor and friendſhip. Note——This laſt chapter was not wrote by *Jeremiah* (ſee *chap.* li. 64.) but by *Baruch* or *Ezra*, or whoever collected *Jeremiah*'s prophecies into one volume.

DANIEL

DANIEL vii.

DANIEL had the viſion of the four monarchies, and of the kingdom of the *Meſſiah*.

DANIEL viii.

DANIEL had the viſion of the ram and he-goat.

DANIEL v.

DANIEL reads the hand-writing on the wall. *Belſhazzar* is ſlain, *Darius* the *Mede* took the *Aſſyrian* kingdom.

DANIEL vi.

DANIEL's being advanced by *Darius* above all the princes, and made prime miniſter, next to the king, raiſed ſo great an envy againſt him among the courtiers, that they laid the ſnare for him, which brought him to the lion's den.

DANIEL ix.

DANIEL, apprehending from the prophecy of *Jeremiah*, that the 70 years captivity of *Judah* were drawing to an end, maketh his prayer to God for the reſtoration of *Jeruſalem*. In anſwer to which, the Angel *Gabriel* was ſent to aſſure him of a much greater redemption to the *Jewiſh* nation by the *Meſſiah*, at the end of 70 weeks, or 490 years.

EZRA i, ii.

DARIUS dieth; *Cyrus* ſucceeds him, and by his decree puts an end to the 70 years captivity of the *Jews*. This in the firſt chapter of *Ezra*. In the ſecond chapter an account is given of the *Jews* that returned. Note—On the return of *Judah* and *Benjamin* from the Babyloniſh captivity, ſeveral of the other tribes of *Iſrael* returned with them out of *Aſſyria*, *Babylon*, and *Media*, whither they had been before carried. *Ezra* vi. 17. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 536. p. 190. Upon this joyous occaſion the 126th Pſalm was compoſed.

EZRA iii.

THE *Jews* begin to rebuild *Jeruſalem* and the Temple.

CHAP. XXXVI.

PROPHETS *after the* CAPTIVITY *under the second* TEMPLE.

EZRA iv.

THE *Samaritans* obſtruct the *Jews* in the building of the City and Temple. And ſo the work ceaſed till the ſecond year of *Darius Hyſtaſpes*; namely for 14 years.

DANIEL x, xi, xii.

THE viſions and prophecies in theſe chapters were revealed to *Daniel* in the third year of *Cyrus*, and the third year after the Captivity.

HAGGAI i. Ver. 1——12.

HAGGAI excites *Zerubbabel*, the governor, and *Jeſhua*, the high-prieſt, to build the Lord's houſe, in the ſecond year of *Darius Hyſtaſpes*.

HAGGAI i. Ver. 12. to the End. EZRA v. 1, 2.

ZERUBBABEL and *Jeſhua* immediately apply to the work.

HAGGAI ii. Ver. 1—10.

HAGGAI incourages them from the Lord to proceed.

ZECHARIAH i. Ver. 1——7.

ZECHARIAH makes his firſt addreſs to the *Jews*, who were building the Temple, aſſuring them that God would turn to them with a bleſſing, if they turned to him by repentance and reformation.

HAGGAI ii. Ver. 10. to the End.

HAGGAI rebukes the indifference of the *Jews* in building the Temple; incourages vigorous endeavours with the bleſſing of plenty; and aſſures *Zerubbabel* of the extraordinary favor of God.

ZECHARIAH

ZECHARIAH i. Ver. 7. to the End. ii, iii, iv, v, vi.

AT this time theſe viſions, greatly incouraging the *Jews* in building the City and Temple, and aſſuring them of the Divine protection againſt all their enemies, were revealed to *Zechariah*.

EZRA v. Ver. 3. to the End.

THE *Samaritans* again diſturb the *Jews*, and put a ſtop to the building of the Temple.

EZRA vi. Ver. 1——15.

DARIUS ſends a decree to *Jeruſalem* poſitively ordering the Temple to be rebuilt, and the expences of it furniſhed out of the taxes of the provinces. Which accordingly was done, till it was finiſhed. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 518.

ZECHARIAH vii, viii.

THE *Jews*, who were in *Babylon*, (for great numbers ſtill remained there, and in other parts of the *Perſian* empire,) judging that the ſtate of *Judea* and *Jeruſalem* was now ſo thoroughly reſtored and eſtabliſhed by *Darius*'s decree, that it might be no longer proper to keep the faſt in the fifth month, (when the City and Temple were burnt by *Nebuzaradan*) which they had hitherto obſerved for 70 years together, ſent two meſſengers to *Jeruſalem*, to aſk the opinion of the prieſts and prophets, that were there, about this matter. And God gave them, by the Prophet *Zechariah*, the anſwer relating to that, and other faſts, which we have in the ſeventh and eighth chapters of his prophecy.

ZECHARIAH ix, x, xi, xii, xiii, xiv.

As theſe chapters have no date, we may ſuppoſe they were delivered in ſome of the times ſubſequent to the fourth year of *Darius Hyſtaſpes*.

EZRA vi. Ver. 15. to the End.

THIS year the Temple was finiſhed, and dedicated with great joy and ſolemnity. The *Jews* had been about it from firſt to laſt 20 years.

ESTHER i.

ARTAXERXES, or *Ahaſuerus*, being thoroughly ſettled in his throne, made a great feaſt for all his nobles, and divorced *Vaſhti* his queen.

ESTHER ii. Ver. 1—16.

A collection of virgins made for the king, of which *Eſther* was one.

EZRA vii, viii, ix, x.

IN the begining of this year *Ezra* received from *Artaxerxes*, or *Ahaſuerus*, a very ample commiſſion, for his return to *Jeruſalem*, with any of his countreymen, that were diſpoſed to go along with him; giving them full authority in things both civil and religious, to regulate both according to the law. This decree was probably granted at the ſolicitation of *Eſther*. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 458. The decree, the families and numbers of the *Jews*, that went with *Ezra* to *Jeruſalem*, fall within the compaſs of this and the next year, and are contained in the four laſt chapters of this Book.

NOTE——From *Ezra*'s entering upon this work, the begining of *Daniel*'s 70 weeks is to be computed. Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 458. p. 377. Note alſo——That *Ezra* continued in the government about 13 years; till *Nehemiah* ſucceeded him in the 20th year of *Artaxerxes*, or *Ahaſuerus*.

ESTHER ii. Ver. 16——21.

ESTHER, after having been only concubine about two years, is now made queen.

ESTHER ii. Ver. 21. to the End.

BIGTHAN and *Tareſh*, two eunuchs in the palace, entered into a conſpiracy againſt the life of *Artaxerxes*, or *Ahaſuerus*, which was diſcovered to the king by *Mordecai*, queen *Eſther*'s uncle.

ESTHER iii, iv, v, &c. to the End of the Book.

HAMAN, an *Amalekite*, deſcended from king *Agag*, in *Saul*'s time, made prime miniſter to *Artaxerxes*, laid a plot to extirpate the whole race of the *Jews*. But it turned upon himſelf, as related in the book of *Eſther*.

NEHEMIAH

NEHEMIAH i, ii, iii, &c. to the End of the Book.

NEHEMIAH, with a commiſſion from *Artaxerxes*, or *Ahaſuerus*, probably by favor of queen *Eſther*, (Neh. ii. 6.) ſucceedeth *Ezra* in the government of *Judea*, rebuilds the walls, repeoples *Jeruſalem*, reforms diſorders, &c. Thus he was employed for 12 years; namely, from the 20th to the 32d year of *Artaxerxes*, Neh. v. 14. xiii. 6. Within which time *Ezra* is ſuppoſed to have publiſhed his edition of the Hebrew-Scriptures. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con.* p. 475, &c.

Nehemiah returns from *Jeruſalem* to the *Perſian* court. *Neh.* xiii. 6.

MALACHI i, ii, iii, iv.

ABOUT this time flouriſhed *Malachi*, the Prophet. See Dr. PRIDEAX's *Con. ad An.* 428. p. 570.

NEREMIAH xiii. Ver. 6, 7, &c.

AFTER *certain days*, i. e. after about five years, *Nehemiah* comes again to *Jeruſalem* with a new commiſſion, and makes further reformation. With which act of reformation, the holy Scriptures of the Old Teſtament are cloſed up.

Simon the juſt, high-prieſt of the *Jews*, compleats the Canon of the Old Teſtament, by adding the *two Books of Chronicles*, *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, *Eſther*, and *Malachi*. "That theſe could not be put into the Canon by "*Ezra* is plain. For four of thoſe books are upon juſt grounds, ſup-"poſed to have been written by *Ezra* himſelf, (that is, the *two Books of* "*Chronicles*, and the Books of *Ezra* and *Eſther*,) and the Book of *Ne-*"*hemiah* was written after his [*Ezra*'s] time; and ſo moſt likely was "the Book of *Malachi* alſo. And therefore a later time muſt be aſſign-"ed for their inſertion into the ſacred Canon; and none is more likely, "than that of *Simon the juſt*, who is ſaid to have been the laſt of the "men of the great ſynagogue. What the *Jews* call the great ſynagogue, "were a number of elders amounting to 120, ſucceeding each other in "a continued ſeries from the return of the *Jews* from the *Babyloniſh* "captivity, to the time of *Simon the juſt*, and labored in reſtoring the "*Jewiſh* church and ſtate in that country. In order to which, the "holy Scriptures being the rule they were to go by, their chief care and "ſtudy was to make a true collection of thoſe Scriptures, and publiſh "them accurately to the people. *Ezra*, and the men of the great ſy-"nagogue in his time, ſettled the Canon of all but the foreſaid books; "and thoſe were probably ſettled, and added to the Canon, in the times "of *Simon the juſt*, who died about 31 years after *Alexander the great*. "For in 1 *Chron.* iii. 19, &c. the genealogy of the ſons of *Zerubbabel* is "carried down for ſo many deſcents after him as may well be thought

" to reach the times of *Alexander*. And in *Neh.* xii. 22. we have the " days of *Jaddua* ſpoken of, as then paſt; but *Jaddua* outlived *Alexan-* " *der* two years. Theſe paſſages, therefore, were probably inſerted by " *Simon the juſt*, who perfected, and finally ſettled the Canon of the " holy Scriptures. After this followed the *miſhnical* times, that is, the " times of traditions. Hitherto the Scriptures were the only rule of " faith and manners, which God's people ſtudied; but thenceforth tra- " ditions began to be regarded, till at length they overbore the word " of God itſelf, as we find in our Saviour's time. The collection of " theſe traditions they call the *miſhnah*, that is, the ſecond law; and " thoſe who delivered and taught them were ſtiled the *miſhnical* Doc- " tors." See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. Anno* 292. *Ptolemy Soter.* 13. *

CHAP. XXXVII.

The State of the JEWS, *and of other* NATIONS, *at the Time when our Lord came into the World.*

AFTER the *Babyloniſh* captivity the *Jews* no more lapſed into idolatry, but remained ſteady in the acknowledgment and wor- ſhip of the one living and true God. Even then they fell into new ways of perverting religion, and the wiſe and holy intentions of the Divine law. I. By laying all the ſtreſs on the external and leſs momentous parts of it, while they neglected the weighty and ſubſtantial, true holineſs of heart and life. Mankind are too eaſily drawn into this error. While they retain a ſenſe of religion, they are too apt to liſten to any methods by which it may be reduced to a conſiſtency with the gratifications of their paſſions, pride, and avarice. Thus, by placing religion in mere profeſſion, or in the zealous obſervance of rites and ceremonies, inſtead of real piety, truth, purity, and goodneſs, they learn to be religious without virtue. II. By ſpeculating and commenting upon the Divine commands and inſtitutions, till their force is quite enervated, and they are refined into a ſenſe that will commodiouſly allow a ſlight regard inſtead of ſincere obedience. III. By confirming and eſtabliſhing the two former methods of corrupting religion, by tradition and the authority of learned Rabbies. Pretending, that there was a ſyſtem of religious rules delivered by word of mouth from *Moſes*, explanatory of the writen law, known only to thoſe Rabbies; to whoſe judgment, therefore, and deciſion, all the people were to ſubmit.

This, in time, the ſpace of 219 years, became the general ſtate of religion among the *Jews*, after they had diſcarded idolatry. And this ſpirit prevailed among them for ſome ages, (290 years) before the coming of the *Meſſiah*. But, however, it did not interfere with the main ſyſtem of Providence, or the introducing the knowledge of God among the Nations,

* Turn to the Appendix, for the Chronological Dates belonging to this and chapters xxxiv. xxxv.

tions, as they ſtill continued ſtedfaſt in the worſhip of the true God, without danger of deviating from it. Beſides, they were now, much more than formerly, exerciſed in reading, thinking, and reaſoning, and were more capable of themſelves of judging what was right. *Luke* xii. 57. And ſeveral of them did ſo judge. Some of them were truly religious and virtuous; and all of them had ſtrong expectation of the *Meſſiah* about the time of his appearance; and were ſufficiently qualified to judge of religious matters, and of the evidences of his miſſion. Thus the *Jews* were prepared by the preceeding diſpenſation for the reception of the *Meſſiah*, and the juſt notions of religion, which he was ſent to inculcate; inſomuch that their guilt muſt be highly aggravated if they rejected him and his inſtructions. It could not be for want of capacity, but of integrity, and muſt be aſſigned to wilful blindneſs and obduracy. Out of regard to temporal power, grandeur, and enjoyments, they loved darkneſs rather than light.

In the mean time, the Pagan Nations had made great openings in wiſdom and virtue. Thoſe arts that began in *Greece*, had traveled into other lands; learning had got footing among the illiterate; and humanity and ſocial affections among the barbarous; and many good and uſeful books, uſeful even to this day among Chriſtians, were writen in Ethics for the right conduct of life. The light of nature was carried high; or rather, the darkneſs of it was much enlightened. Such was, at length, the ſtate of the *Gentiles*, God having ſtill been pleaſed, from time to time, to raiſe up among them perſons uncommonly endowed, for their inſtruction, and to fit them for the day, when he ſhould more explicitly reveal himſelf, and his ſacred will to them. In a word, what with time, and the tranſmigrating of knowledge from region to region, and the labors of poets and philoſophers, men, at about the *claſſic æra*, when our Lord came into the world, in general, had gained tolerable juſt ideas of virtue and moral truth; and ſo, were in a condition to apprehend and embrace the higher and more important truths of God, and his Providence, and a future ſtate.

For many ages the *Jews* had been well known in the eaſtern empires, among the *Aſſyrians*, *Chaldeans*, *Medes*, and *Perſians*; but, till the time of *Alexander the great*, they had no communication with the *Grecians*. About the year before Chriſt 332, *Alexander* built *Alexandria* in *Egypt*; and to people his new city, removed thither many of the *Jews*, allowing them the uſe of their own laws and religion, and the ſame liberties with the *Macedonians* themſelves. The *Macedonians*, who ſpake the *Greek* language, and other *Greeks*, were the principal inhabitants of *Alexandria*. From them the *Jews* learned to ſpeak *Greek*, which was the common language of the city, and which ſoon became the native language of the *Jews*, that lived there; who, on that account, were called *Helleniſts*, or *Greek-Jews*, mentioned *Acts* vi. 1—9. xi. 20. Theſe *Greek-Jews* had ſynagogues in *Alexandria*; and for their benefit, the five books of *Moſes*, which alone, at firſt, were publickly read, were tranſlated into *Greek*, (by whom is uncertain) and read in their ſynagogues every ſabbath-day. And in the time of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, about 168 years before *Chriſt*, when the Prophets alſo began to be read in the ſynagogues of *Judea*, the Prophets alſo were tranſlated into *Greek* for the uſe of the *Alexandrian* Jews.

This tranſlation contributed much to the ſpread of the knowledge of true religion among the Nations in the weſtern parts of the world.

For the *Jews*, their ſynagogues and worſhip, were, after *Alexander*'s death, diſperſed almoſt every where among the Nations. *Ptolemy*, one of *Alexander*'s ſucceſſors, having reduced *Jeruſalem* and all *Judea*, about 320 years before *Chriſt*, carried a hundred thouſand *Jews* into *Egypt*, and there raiſed conſiderable numbers of them to places of truſt and power; and ſeveral of them he placed in *Cyrene* and *Libya*. *Seleucus*, another of *Alexander*'s ſucceſſors, about 300 years before *Chriſt*, built *Antioch* in *Cilicia*, and many other cities, in all 35, and ſome of them capital cities in the greater and leſſer *Aſia*; in all which he planted the *Jews*, giving them equal privileges and immunities with the *Greeks* and *Macedonians*; eſpecially at *Antioch* in *Syria*, where they ſettled in great numbers, and became almoſt as conſiderable a part of that city, as they were at *Alexandria*. Dr. Prideaux's *Con. Anno* 293. *Ptolemy Soter* 12. On that memorable day of *Pentecoſt*, Acts ii. 5, 9, 11, 12. were aſſembled in *Jeruſalem*, *Jews*, *devout men*, *out of every nation under heaven*; namely, *Parthians*, *Medes*, and *Perſians* of the province of *Elymais*, inhabitants of *Meſopotamia*, *Judea*, *Cappadocia*, *Pontus*, *Aſia*, *Phrygia*, *Pamphylia*, *Egypt*, *Cyrene* in *Lybia*, *Rome*, *Cretes*, and *Arabs*, who were all either natural *Jews*, or devout men, *i. e.* proſelytes to the *Jewiſh* religion. And in every city of the *Roman* empire, where *Paul* preached, he found a body of his countreymen, the *Jews*; except in *Athens*, which was, at that time, I ſuppoſe, a town of no conſiderable trade. Which ſhews that the *Jews*, and their ſynagogues, at the time of our Lord's appearance, were providentially ſcattered over all the *Roman* empire; and had in every place introduced, more or leſs, among the nations, the knowledge and worſhip of God; and ſo had prepared great numbers for the reception of the Goſpel.

About the time that *Alexander* built *Alexandria* in *Egypt*, the uſe of the *Papyrus* for writing was firſt found out in that country. Dr. Prideaux's *Con. Anno* 332. *Darius* 4. p. 706. Vol. II. This invention was ſo favorable to literature, that *Ptolemy Soter*, one of *Alexander*'s ſucceſſors, was thereby enabled to erect a *muſeum*, or library; which by his ſon and ſucceſſor, *Philadelphus*, who died 247 years before *Chriſt*, was augmented to an hundred thouſand volumes; and by ſucceeding *Ptolemies* to ſeven hundred thouſand. Part of this library, which was placed in a ſeparate building from the other part, happened to be burnt when *Julius Cæſar* laid ſiege to *Alexandria*; but after that loſs, it was again much augmented, and ſoon grew up to be larger, and of more eminent note, than the former; and ſo it continued for many ages to be of great fame, and uſe in thoſe parts, till at length it was burnt and finally deſtroyed by the *Saracens*, in the year of our Lord 642. Dr. Prideaux's *Con.* Vol. III. p. 21, *&c. Anno* 284. This plainly proves how much the invention of turning the *Papyrus* into *paper* contributed to the increaſe of books, and the advancement of learning for ſome ages before the coming of our Lord. For doubtleſs, by this means, private hands would alſo more eaſily be ſupplied with books than before.

Add to all this, that the world, after many changes and revolutions, was, by God's all-ruling wiſdom, thrown into that form of civil affairs, which

which beſt ſuited with the great intended alteration. The many petty ſtates and tyrannies, whoſe paſſions and bigotry might have run counter to the ſchemes of Providence, were all ſwallowed up in one great power, the *Romans*; to which all appeals lay; the ſeat of which, *Rome*, lay at a great diſtance from *Jeruſalem*, the ſpring from whence the Goſpel was to ariſe, and flow to all nations. And therefore, as no material obſtruction to the Goſpel could ariſe, but from that one quarter, none could ſuddenly ariſe from thence, but only in proceſs of time, when the Goſpel was ſufficiently ſpread and eſtabliſhed, as it did not in the leaſt interfere with the *Roman* polity or government. The Goſpel was firſt publiſhed in a time of general peace and tranquility throughout the whole world, which gave the preachers of it an opportunity of paſſing freely from one country to another, and the minds of men the advantage of attending calmly to it. Many ſavage Nations were civilized by the *Romans*, and acquainted with the arts and virtues of their conquerors.

Thus the darkeſt countries had their thoughts awakened, and were growing to a capacity of receiving, at the ſtated time, the knowledge of true religion. So that all things and circumſtances conſpired now with the views of heaven, and made this apparently *the fulneſs of time*, (Gal. iv. 4.) or the fiteſt juncture for God to reveal himſelf to the *Gentiles*, and to put an end to idolatry throughout the earth. Now the minds of men were generally ripe for a purer and brighter diſpenſation, and the circumſtances of the world were ſuch, as favored the ſucceſs and progreſs of it.

In this very time the *Meſſiah* came; nor, for ought I can ſee, could he have come more opportunely at any other; becauſe the world was at no other preceeding time ſo well prepared to receive his doctrines. As to remiſſion of ſin, and eternal ſalvation, it is all one whenever he came. Becauſe the ſacrifice, which he offered for ſin, had its effects with regard to the time paſt, as well as to the time to come; to the penitent, that were dead, as well to the living, or thoſe that were yet to be born. (See *Scripture Doctrine of Atonement*, p. 80.) Immortality muſt belong as much to thoſe who lived virtuouſly, according to their degree of light, before the *Meſſiah* came, as to thoſe who lived after his coming; and the bleſſedneſs of the future ſtate, though not alike revealed, yet was alike acceſſible to the one as to the other.

Upon a review of the whole, it will appear, that the condition of mankind was bettered ſtep by ſtep, as the reaſon and nature of things directed and would permit. The ſcope and intendment of the whole ſcheme of Divine Providence, in all its various diſpenſations, was to bring human nature, by proper degrees, and in a way conſiſtent with moral agency, to all the beauty, holineſs, and perfection it can, in this preſent ſtate, attain to. And though we are not indeed able abſolutely to trace all the reaſons of the Divine conduct, and to demonſtrate the wiſdom of it in every particular; yet we may, in general, diſcover, that all the parts of this ſcheme were wiſely formed, and purſued, depending regularly on each other, leading to the ſame great and good end, and adapted to the reſpective circumſtances and condition of mankind.

Note—After the publication of the Goſpel, the *Jewiſh* peculiarity was no longer of uſe for preſerving the knowledge of God in the world.

That

That end would be much better anſwered by its diſſolution, and the diſperſion of the *Jews* all over the earth, as they are even unto this day. [For the moſt excellent character of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the Divine principles, doctrine, and ſpirit of the Goſpel, ſee my Treatiſe upon the LORD'S-SUPPER.] *

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Mankind, having abuſed their Natural POWERS, *ſtand in need of an Extraordinary* REVELATION.

THE Scriptures are the word of God; they are the language and addreſs of the univerſal Father to his children in this world, whom he hath endowed with rational faculties to hear and underſtand his voice. The Scriptures are given *by inſpiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs:* 2 Tim. iii. 16. The glory of God indeed is to be ſeen in all the works of his hands; and the ſpeech of his Almighty power, wiſdom, and goodneſs is to be heard in the appearances of creation which are daily before our eyes. *Pſal.* xix. 1, &c. Mankind in a faithful uſe of their natural Powers, might, without any other guide, know God. *Rom.* i. 19. *For that which may be known of God is manifeſt in them; for God hath ſhewed it unto them (for the inviſible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, ſo) that* even the Heathen, who have no other rule but the light of nature, they might be *without excuſe*, if they are totally ignorant of God. But how much Mankind in all ages have abuſed and miſapplied their underſtandings is notoriouſly evident, and therefore it muſt be evident how much they ſtand in need of an extraordinary Revelation to correct their errors, to reduce them to the obedience of God, and to ſecure them from relapſing into idolatry and apoſtacy from him.

I think, no book can contain more evident marks of ſuch a Revelation, than the Scriptures, eminently ſo called, which we are happily poſſeſſed of. There we have the fulleſt and cleareſt account of the nature and perfections of God, beyond what the world at beſt could have attained to, and far beyond what could, in the ordinary courſe of things, have been preſerved through ſucceeding generations. The knowledge of

* With this chapter ends Dr. TAYLOR's SCHEME of SCRIPTURE-DIVINITY, from the copy he printed at *Warrington*, for the uſe of the Students, in the Academy there; and ſince corrected, with the Hebrew and Greek words inſerted, by himſelf.

The following chapters the EDITOR hath annexed, and are printed from Dr. TAYLOR's Manuſcript; and would have appeared to greater advantage, had they had his correcting hand.

of God not being a mere ſpeculative truth, but having near connexion with our morals, would conſequently, as the morals of men are very liable to be corrupted, have alſo proportionably been obſcured, till it had in a manner quite vaniſhed away; which we know hath in fact been true. In the Scriptures, as in a durable ſtorehouſe, not to be demoliſhed by time, or uncertain tradition, we have the moſt noble diſcoveries of the nature and perfections of God, as he is our Maker, our Father, Owner, Ruler, and daily Benefactor; as he is glorious in all his attributes; as he is infinite, and independent, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, knowledge, wiſdom and power; as perfectly holy, good, righteous, and true. And theſe glories of the Divine nature are deſcribed, not in the way of philoſophical diſſertations, not by a ſeries of abſtract reaſoning, which how amuſing or inſtructing ſoever to minds of a more refined turn and taſte, are but of little ſervice to the bulk of mankind, who have but little leiſure, and perhaps leſs inclination to attend to the curious and abſtruſer deductions of reaſon; not thus are the glories of the Divine nature delineated in Scripture, but exhibited in a long and eaſily intelligible ſerios of facts and events, wherein God hath manifeſted his goodneſs, wiſdom, power, and juſtice, from the begining of the world. In which way the mind, with very little labor of thought, is at once convinced of the being and perfections of God, and ſtruck with admiration, reverence, love, and every right affection which the knowledge of God ſhould produce in us.

In the Scriptures any one, in common life, may not only very readily ſee that God is, and that he is all that the moſt learned, the moſt exact, the moſt ſubtle, the moſt ſublime philoſophy, all that the utmoſt application and ſtudy of the wiſeſt men can diſcover; but he ſeeth this at the ſame time in a practical light; he ſeeth that God is all this to *us*; that as great as he is in himſelf, he is our God and Father, that he hath, from his own immenſity of being, given us being, a noble and diſtinguiſhed kind of being; that he conſtantly regards us, loveth us, intereſts himſelf in our affairs, is concerned for our welfare, is daily near us, the object of our truſt and dependance; that all our ſafety is in his favour, and that in his favour, and under his protection, we are infinitely ſafe and happy. That we are accountable to him for our actions, that we are continually under his eye, and can flee no whither from his ſpirit and preſence; that we ought always to ſet him before us, to act as in his ſight, and to approve ourſelves to his all-ſearching eye; that he hath taken us into the neareſt relations to himſelf, that his deſign is to make us good, in order to make us for ever happy; that for this purpoſe, he hath been carrying on various diſpenſations from the begining of the world to invite and draw men unto himſelf.

At length, in the fulneſs of time, in that time which to his infinite wiſdom ſeemed moſt expedient, he ſent a divine meſſenger, the word, his only begotten Son, from his own boſom, to redeem men from iniquity, to reconcile them to God; and in the way, Divine wiſdom judged moſt proper, to eſtabliſh upon the moſt firm and beautiful foundation, the eternal ſalvation of all pious and virtuous men that have ever been, or ſhall hereafter be in the world. The eternal God in Chriſt will be their everlaſting ſtrength, and joy, and glory. Thus, I would obſerve,

we not only, in the eaſieſt and cleareſt way, learn God and his perfections from Scripture, but we learn them in a manner the moſt proper and powerful to engage and unite our hearts to God; to warm and quicken our ſpirits, to excite us to the love and obedience of God, and to conſider ourſelves infinitely intereſted in his attributes and perfections. Which is to learn divine things; i. e. the moſt excellent things in a method vaſtly ſuperior to all the reaſonings and inſtructions of the beſt and wiſeſt of philoſophers.

In the Scriptures, any man of common ſenſe may not only with eaſe learn his duty in the fulleſt extent, but at the ſame time by the numerous examples of pious men in all ages, he may ſee that it is practicable, and may ſee how to ingage in it; how exact, how conſtant, how ready and chearful he ſhould be in the diſcharge of it; how he ought to reſiſt temptations, to ſtruggle with difficulties. Even a mean capacity by reading the Scriptures, ſhall at the ſame time diſcern the reaſonableneſs, and the beauty of holineſs, and alſo be furniſhed with the ſtrongeſt arguments and motives to embrace it, and to perſevere therein, ſhall be aſſured of the Divine aſſiſtance and protection in a religious courſe, ſhall find the moſt proper conſolations and encouragements in every the moſt diſtreſſed ſtate of affairs; to every precept he ſhall find an adjoined promiſe, and his duty will ſhine brightly before his eyes, in the light and hope of everlaſting glory.

There we have the trueſt and moſt effectual rules for forming our minds into all habits of virtue; not ſimple propoſitions, declaring what we ought to do and be, but rules of life intermixed with the power and ſplendor of Divine grace, working mightily to renew us into the Divine Nature. There religion appears in all its truth, luſtre, ſweetneſs, and majeſty. There it is dreſſed in all its charms; not as a ſour, ſevere, moroſe, gloomy principle, forbiding enjoyment, and the parent only of ſorrow, horror, and deſpair, but as our life, our glory, our peace, our joy; as giving us the trueſt reliſh and enjoyment of life, as the ſource of the moſt ſolid pleaſure and comfort, as uniting us to God, as lodging us for ever in the Almighty arms of his love and goodneſs, as leading to, and preparing for endleſs joys and pleaſures in his preſence.

As to ſin and wickedneſs, the philoſophers have ſaid much concerning the odious nature of vice, that it is evil, and the worſt of evils, that it is the diſeaſe and deformity of the mind, hurtful to the health of the body, and ruinous to the reputation and eſtate. Their reflections were ſo far juſt, but the benefit of them was confined to men of letters and ſtudy; the vulgar received little or no advantage from them; but in the Scriptures, the meaneſt minds are favoured with far better inſtructions than they could give. There ſin is not only ſet forth in all its odious colours, and in all its pernicious effects, as to this preſent life, but its deadly nature is demonſtrated as it ſtands in contrariety to God, as it is the tranſgreſſion of his holy law, as it expoſeth us to his diſpleaſure, and diſqualifieth us for his bleſſing; as it is oppoſite to all the ends of our creation, and conſequently as deſerving of death. That God will puniſh all the impenitent workers of iniquity with everlaſting deſtruction, and purge out of his kingdom every thing that offends, that is either miſchievous or polluting. And all this is ſo plainly and powerfully

fully inculcated upon the mind, by many dreadful examples of the Divine vengeance upon ungodly men, throughout the whole ſeries of Scripture-hiſtory, by ſo many expreſs declarations of God's wrath, and ſo many exhortations of his goodneſs and mercy, to turn from every evil way, that no one, who carefully and ſeriouſly reads the Scriptures, can miſs not only of ſeeing the evil, the irregularity and deformity of ſin, but of having his mind affected with it, and wrought into the moſt rational and the moſt ſettled deteſtation of it.

With regard to the pardon of ſin, the wiſeſt of philoſophers ſeem to have very imperfect notions of it. They rarely and very ſuperficially conſidered it in its relation of diſſonancy to the Divine perfections; and therefore ſay little or nothing concerning the placableneſs of the Deity, whether God would pardon ſin, or in what way his wiſdom thought proper to do it. Sacrifices were frequent among them, but they ſeem to have underſtood nothing of their true nature and end, nor were at all ſolicitous to inquire into them. In truth, they did not underſtand the true demerit of ſin, and therefore of courſe, muſt be in the dark, as to the remiſſion of it. But all theſe things are open and obvious to the weakeſt capacity in Scripture.

How much the world was in the dark about a future ſtate without a Revelation is well known, and how clearly now the world to come is opened to us in the awful proſpects of eternal happineſs, or endleſs perdition, can be concealed from none who are ever ſo little acquainted with the Goſpel of Chriſt.——Theſe things duly attended to, will ſhew us the admirable excellency of the holy Scriptures; that God's word is truth, and able to make us wiſe unto ſalvation; and further do demonſtrate, that it is our duty to be much in reading them.

Reading the Scriptures is one of the firſt principles of our religion, as we are Chriſtians, becauſe our profeſſion is built wholly upon the Scriptures. We juſtly own no other rule of our faith but the word of God. *Eph.* ii. 20. *We are built upon the foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner-ſtone.* And we are built upon no other foundation. If we are true Chriſtians, however we may uſe or value the writings of men, we make not them, not the beſt of them, the rule of our faith, but the word of God alone. But that rule ought to be thoroughly peruſed, and digeſted, otherwiſe how good ſoever in itſelf, or how much ſoever we profeſs to take it for our rule, it is in fact, no rule to us. The word of God is the guide of our actions; *it is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path.* Pſal. cxix. 105. Should we not then diligently ſtudy the word of God, that we may not wander from his commandments? The word of God is the ſpring of all our comfort and hopes.

There and there alone, we have the rich and immenſe treaſure of the Divine promiſes; and from thence alone, we can draw ſolid ſupport and conſolation, in any dark hour of trial and affliction. In ſhort, to all the valuable purpoſes of knowledge and life, the Scriptures do infinitely excel all human compoſitions whatſoever. They are but as the twinkling ſtars to that ocean of light which is poured out daily from the body of the ſun. Of all the means of knowledge and wiſdom in the world, I know nothing to be compared with the word of God. The reaſon of the

the thing therefore requires we ſhould have our eyes intent upon this light and illumination. For this end God hath given us this invaluable treaſure, the holy Scriptures, that we ſhould make them our ſtudy.

It muſt be obſerved carefully, that it is not enough to be much in reading the Scriptures, but while we read we ſhould employ all our attention to underſtand them. The Scriptures may be underſtood, but evidently not in every degree by every man; for as there are various ſorts and degrees of knowledge in Scripture, ſome perhaps, at preſent, beyond the reach of any man that ever yet was in the world; and as there are in men various capacities, and degrees of learning, ſo it is manifeſt, all men cannot attain to the ſame degree of underſtanding in divine things; but there muſt neceſſarily be a great difference between the knowledge of one man and another in matters of faith and Revelation. This ſhews the abſurdity of the Popiſh ſcheme, which pretends to reduce the Chriſtian faith in all its parts to a certain invariable ſtandard, to which every man either explicitly or implicitly, either with or without underſtanding, muſt conform.

This ſhews how much ſoever it is our duty to communicate knowledge one to another, that it is quite contrary to true religion to quarrel with one another, or to be diſpleaſed becauſe we have not all the ſame degree of underſtanding in matters of faith and religion; becauſe this, according to the preſent conſtitution of our minds, and of the Revelation God hath given us, which he never intended ſhould be equally underſtood by all, is quite impracticable. But although the Scriptures are not to be underſtood in every degree by every man, yet they may be underſtood by every man ſo far as God requireth, i. e. ſo far as he is capable of underſtanding them; for what a man can underſtand, he may underſtand, if he is not wanting to himſelf.

And as God can require of no man beyond his abilities, ſo no more than what a man can underſtand of Scripture is to him a rule of faith and practice; for what he cannot underſtand, he cannot be bound to believe or do. Further, thoſe things in Scripture which are of the higheſt importance, and moſt conducive to a holy life, are generally very eaſy to be underſtood; and therefore how perplexed ſoever thoſe other things may be about which men have differed, though not ſo perplexed in Revelation, as they are in mens heads and writings; yet I ſay, how perplexed and difficult ſoever they may be, the grand principles of faith and practice are ſo evident, that any ordinary capacity, may, with due care and attention, eaſily gain the moſt comfortable knowledge of them. Thus the Scriptures may be underſtood.

So far as they are not underſtood, they are, at leaſt, uſeleſs to us. Nay further, the Scriptures miſunderſtood, may prove very hurtful to us. The things chiefly to be underſtood in Scripture are *principles*, or the grounds and reaſons of things, and *precepts* which are the rules of duty; now if we miſtake either, we ſhall throw all into confuſion, our way will be all miſt and clouds, that which ſhould be light will be darkneſs, or, which is all one, a falſe light to miſlead us; that which ſhould be our joy, will be our heavineſs; that which ſhould be our comfort, and inſpire chearful hope, will be a dead weight to burthen our ſpirits and clog our courſe. Our path which ſhould be as the ſhining light, that ſhineth more and more, will be a gloomy melancholy road, and we ſhall

ſhall make our way with difficulty, becauſe we want that true ſenſe and knowledge of the ways and will of God, which is neceſſary to give life, comfort, and vigour. Chimeras and frightful images will terrify our conſciences, and fill us with groundleſs fears; God will be painted in monſtrous colours, and all the raviſhing glories of his truth, wiſdom, and love, which ſhould powerfully draw our hearts to him, will be hid from our eyes. The luſtre of redeeming grace will in part, or wholly, be eclipſed. Some parts of religion will be ſuperſtitiouſly magnified, while others of greater conſequence will be undervalued.

Further, if for want of due attention to the ſenſe of Scripture we miſtake and fall into error, we ought to be ſenſible, that religious error is of a far worſe nature than any other; not only as it is error in a matter of the greateſt importance, but as it is of all others, the moſt difficult to be corrected. For under the ſacred name of religion it ſhelters and defends itſelf, and gains the character of truth, of important, neceſſary, awful, and perhaps excellent truth; and the unwary think themſelves bound in conſcience and duty to maintain it with zeal; and then whoever endeavours to correct it, though ever ſo much in the ſpirit of meekneſs and peace, muſt do it at his peril. Hence thoſe groſſer inſtances of perſecution and bloodſhed which have fouled the Chriſtian name. Hence thoſe wranglings, debates, heats, animoſities, which have deſtroyed Chriſtian ſocieties. Theſe things are the fruit of mens taking their religious principles upon truſt, and not fetching them from the Scriptures, ſtudied, and underſtood by themſelves. Such contempt and neglect of the word of God expoſeth them to ſtrong deluſion, and ſuch deluſion leads them to fight in the dark for they know not what. Thus religion is corrupted, the corruption of it defended, and irreligion and infidelity propagated, even by religious people themſelves. So the ſceptic, who is indifferent to any principles, when he finds abſurdity mixed with the Chriſtian faith, taking the whole for a true account of Chriſtianity, rejects the whole. For even common ſenſe will not allow that Revelation to be divine, which cannot, in many of its parts, be reconciled with the known perfections of God.

By this unhappy means what numbers in our land have been drawn into Deiſm! And, by this unhappy means, I gueſs, if the truth were known, religion appears but in a doubtful light to many who ſeem to be ſtrict profeſſors of it; for where it is not received in its proper evidence, there cannot be, I think, a full and ſtrong aſſent of faith; and no man can receive it in its proper evidence, who doth not endeavour carefully to underſtand the Scriptures.

Thus many who talk much of the word of God, and pretend a great reverence for it, may poſſibly at the laſt day be ranked among the deſpiſers of it; becauſe, although they have, perhaps, been much in reading of it, they never ſet themſelves in good earneſt to underſtand it, and ſo in effect might as well not have read it at all; for their reading of it is only from a ſuperſtitious opinion, as *Turks*, and *Jews*, and *Papiſts* turn over the books in reputation among them, not from the love of truth, not with a deſire to underſtand the truth; that moſt people ſuppoſe they underſtand before they read their bibles, or however without reading their bibles; not to open their eyes, and to give them a more

a more juſt and diſtinct view of the ways and diſpenſations of God, ſuch things they learn from other books; not to confirm and eſtabliſh their minds in the faith of God and of Chriſt; not for thoſe purpoſes, I fear, are the Scriptures read, but only in a cuſtomary, ſuperſtitious, or however, in a very careleſs, ſuperficial way; and therefore there are ſo few Chriſtians that grow in grace, that riſe in ſpiritual ſtrength, peace, love, and joy, becauſe there are ſo few that grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. 2 *Pet.* iii. 18.

The full knowledge of Chriſt moſt people preſume they have attained long ago, and to talk of knowing more of Chriſt, or in a clearer and more rational way, is perfectly ſhocking to them. They have ſomewhere or other fixed the preciſe ſtandard of Divine knowledge, and either more or leſs than that ſtandard of their's is impious and heretical. How then can they grow in the knowledge of Chriſt? How can they ſet themſelves to underſtand the Scriptures, who in another way, as they think, have already gained the whole ſum and body of ſpiritual underſtanding? See *Rom.* xv. 4. *Whatſoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, for our inſtruction, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.* We have hope through that patience and comfort which is taught in the Scriptures; but the grounds and reaſons of that patience and comfort muſt be underſtood, otherwiſe we cannot eſtabliſh in our minds a ſure and ſolid hope. Hence it is that the Chriſtian hope, that faith, and hope which overcometh the world, is ſo great a rarity; therefore ſo few rejoice in hope, becauſe ſo few underſtand the Scriptures, which are the ground of the Chriſtian hope. Laſtly, becauſe the Scriptures are but little underſtood, therefore they are ſo little valued. We delight not in them, becauſe we know ſo little of them.

Let it be remembered, that we ſhall have the *benefit* of the Scriptures by ſtudiouſly endeavouring to underſtand them. Then ſhall we know if we follow on to know the Lord. So far as we underſtand the word of truth, we ſhall be truly enlightened, our conſciences will be rightly directed, and all our principles well eſtabliſhed; we ſhall ſee its real excellency, and it will accordingly be valued and eſteemed; we ſhall taſte its comforts, feel its power, be convinced of its Divine original, and it will be pleaſant and precious to us. The more we underſtand of the Scriptures, the more we ſhall with pleaſure ſee the righteouſneſs, wiſdom, and goodneſs of all the Divine diſpenſations, that all of them are adjuſted and ſettled by the love of a Father, and calculated to promote our happineſs. This will draw our hearts to God, and ſhew us the infinite reaſonableneſs of comporting with the conſtitutions of his grace.

If we are built upon the foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, our faith will ſtand upon a ſure bottom, and not upon the weak, precarious judgment of man; henceforth we ſhall be no more children toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine. *Epheſ.* iv. 14. But ſhall by uſe have our ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern both good and evil. Thus we ſhall with our own eyes ſee the truth, and be inſtrumental in preſerving the purity of our religion. Thus we ſhall grow up into Chriſt in all things, in knowledge, in faith, and love. Thus we ſhall be rooted and grounded in love, in the love of God, of truth, and of our

our neighbour. The knowledge we gain, whether it be more or leſs, being drawn from the true fountain, will compoſe our ſpirits, and incline us neither to deſpiſe the weakneſs of thoſe that know leſs, nor to reject the inſtructions of thoſe that may know more than ourſelves.

Theſe weighty conſiderations ſhould engage us to read the Scriptures with all poſſible care and diligence; to ſtudy them with an upright deſire to gain their true ſenſe and meaning. We all know how much men are at variance about the ſenſe of Scripture, one affirming that this, another that that is the true ſenſe. So it may well be expected to be in our preſent weakneſs; and ſo God hath permited it to be; not to give us occaſion to cenſure, judge, and diſparage one another, as is too common, for this is expreſly forbiden; but this variety of ſentiments is permited to teach us to ceaſe from man, and ſhould convince us that we ought not to reſign our underſtandings or conſciences to any man's judgment whatſoever.

CHAP. XXXIX.

The Hiſtory of Revelation, *and ſome* Objections *to it anſwered.*

I SHALL conſider firſt,

I. The authority and original of holy Scripture; and then,

II. The uſe and importance of it; it *is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs.* 2 Tim. iii. 16. and ſo is profitable for the nobleſt purpoſes, the enlightening of our minds, the purifying of our hearts, the regulating of our practice, and the ſaving of our ſouls.

As to the authority and original of holy Scripture, it is ſaid, by a very good and ſufficient judge, that it *is given by inſpiration of God.* How we are to underſtand being *given by inſpiration of God*, the Apoſtle Peter will inform us, 2 *Pet.* i. 20, 21. *Knowing this*, ſais he, *that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation*, ſenſe, or impulſe; meaning, that no prophecy did iſſue or proceed from the private ſenſe or thoughts of the writer; it was not giving a looſe to his own conceits and imaginations. *For*, as it follows, *the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God ſpake as they were moved by the holy Ghoſt*; or by the holy Spirit of God, enlightening their minds and directing them what to ſay. Thus the Scriptures are inſpired, they are the word of God, and what is contained in them, we are to underſtand and reverence as ſpoken by God himſelf. But then, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, this is to be underſtood only of what *Prophets*, as Prophets, have delivered to us; ſuch as *Moſes*, *Samuel*, *David*, *Iſaiah*, *Jeremiah*, and the reſt.

No *prophecy* of Scripture did proceed from the private ſenſe of the writer, but was dictated by the ſpirit of God. But as for the hiſtorical writings, though, doubtleſs, they owe their original to the ſpecial Providence of God, yet it is ſufficient to ſuppoſe, that they were wrote by men of probity, fully acquainted with the facts which they relate.

This premiſed, I ſhould now advance a few arguments to eſtabliſh the authority and excellency of the Scriptures, that they were indeed given by inſpiration of God, or that in them holy men of God ſpake as they were moved by the holy Spirit. But to prepare the way it is neceſſary I ſhould give a general account and hiſtory of Revelation; then remove ſome Objections which are leveled againſt it, as if it were needleſs, too partial, or too ineffectual, to be conſiſtent with the Divine goodneſs; or as if we were not ſufficiently ſecure, that we now have in poſſeſſion thoſe very books entire and perfect, in which Revelation was originally recorded.

Revelation is that which makes known to us the will and ways of the moſt high God, the Father of the univerſe, the Fountain of all being and happineſs, upon whom we have a neceſſary dependence for life, for underſtanding, and knowledge, for well-being, and enjoyment, at all times and in every reſpect; for without him we cannot live, we cannot breathe, we can have no kind or degree of ſenſe and underſtanding. This is true. And it is equally true, that the beſt, and moſt beneficent of Beings, the greateſt, and the kindeſt of all Fathers, could have no other end or deſign in creating mankind, but his own glory, and their happineſs. The chief end of man muſt be to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever; for perfect goodneſs cannot be conceived to propoſe any lower end in making a creature ſo noble and excellent. But then it is certain, both from the holineſs of God, and the nature of an intelligent, rational being, that a character of holineſs and virtue, of obedience, righteouſneſs, or right conduct, is neceſſary, on our part, to our enjoyment of God, or our happineſs in his favor and bleſſing. It is neceſſary that we love the great Author of our being, that we pay him all due honor and obedience, that we are dutifully ſubmiſſive to his will, that we underſtand our dependence upon him, and what we have to expect from him, that we may be excited to gratitude, and a due improvement of his benefits.

We cannot love, honor, and obey God, unleſs we know him, and are acquainted with him; nor can we poſſibly have any knowledge, or underſtanding of any kind whatever, but what muſt come originally from God. Therefore, that God, our Father, ſhould inſtruct and teach his creatures, whom he has made for the higheſt and nobleſt ends, in thoſe things which immediately relate to his glory and their happineſs, is perfectly conſonant to his goodneſs and love. And that Infinite wiſdom, the Lord and Proprietor of all Being, ſhould have various ways of making known himſelf and his will to us, is alſo perfectly true. He hath produced a great variety of creatures with different powers and inſtincts in our world, by them to ſhow that he can beſtow upon us any kind or degree of being; he hath diſplayed his immenſe greatneſs, power, wiſdom, and goodneſs in the numberleſs glorious bodies which, by his hand, are perpetually rolled about us in the heavens. His continually

providing

providing for our ſubſiſtence, in a way which is quite out of our power, plainly demonſtrates our abſolute dependence upon him, and obligations to him. This is the book of nature ſpread before all nations, and legible to every underſtanding; in which every attentive mind may read the perfections of God, and the main duties which we owe him. But, to him who made our ſenſes and minds, and is always intimate to them, there muſt be many other poſſible ways of making known his will to us; as by an audible voice, a viſion, or ſecret impreſſions upon our ſpirits. Therefore to believe, that God at ſundry times, and divers manners, ſpake to the ancient fathers by the Prophets, is believing a thing very poſſible, reaſonable, and fiting.

And it is no improbable ſuppoſition, that in the earlieſt ages of the world, God ſhould only communicate his will to pious men, and leave them to hand it down to others by tradition. For in thoſe days the longevity of mankind favored this manner of conveyance. With our grand-parent *Adam*, *Methuſelah* lived 243 years; with *Methuſelah*, *Shem* the ſon of *Noah* lived about 97 years; and with *Shem*, *Jacob* the ſon of *Iſaac*, the ſon of *Abraham*, lived 50 years, as appears from the hiſtory of *Geneſis*. So that no more than three perſons, *Methuſelah*, *Shem*, and *Jacob*, were ſufficient to hand down the knowledge and worſhip of the true God, from *Adam* to the time when the children of *Iſrael* went down into *Egypt*, that is, through the ſpace of 2238 years. But when the life of man was reduced to the narrow period of fourſcore years, and the world on all ſides was fallen into various ſorts of corruption, and idolatry and ignorance of God generally prevailed among the nations, tradition evidently ceaſed to be a ſafe mean of conveyance.

It was then the Divine wiſdom judged it a proper time to erect a peculiar kingdom, church, or congregation in the world; and for its illumination gave the knowledge of his will and worſhip in writing, by the hand of his ſervant *Moſes*; that by ſuch writing, or Scripture, divine truth might more eaſily be preſerved, be further ſpread, and, when loſt, more eaſily reſtored. This muſt be acknowledged a wiſe and proper expedient. After the time of *Moſes*, God was pleaſed to give Revelations to the ſubſequent Prophets, as occaſion required; till in the fulneſs of time, the great Prophet, the Son of God, came into the world, opened a new diſpenſation, and all the treaſures of the Divine grace, which had not before been ſo clearly made known to the church and people of God. And what he and his Apoſtles taught is alſo committed to writing, and compleats what we call the Canon of Scripture.

This is the general account and hiſtory of Revelation which I propoſed to give. And we may here obſerve, that a writen Revelation and the church of God are co-exiſtent; that is to ſay, at the ſame time the church was brought into the world, the Scriptures were brought into the church; and both are ſo eſſentially connected, that take away the one, and you take away the other. Take away the Scriptures, and we are reduced to the ſtate of meer nature; our charter is deſtroyed, and our polity, as we are God's church and kingdom, is overthrown. We may indeed, poſſibly, pretend, as the Papiſts do, that we are, though deprived of the Scripture, ſtill a church; yet without the Scriptures, as

our rule and foundation, we are not the church of God, but under a different head, it may be the Pope, or ſome other uſurped authority. But this by the bye.

I ſhall now remove ſome Objections which may be leveled againſt Revelation in general.

It is pretended——*To be quite needleſs, nature and reaſon being ſufficient to direct any man in the plain way of his duty, without any ſupernatural aſſiſtance.* I anſwer——It muſt be allowed, in general, that nature and reaſon are ſufficient to direct any man in the way of his duty, ſo far as God, in his circumſtances, expects duty from him. For God expects duty from every perſon only in proportion to the light he enjoys, and to the talents he hath received. But the experience of all mankind ſhews that nature and reaſon, by themſelves, will advance but a little way in the knowledge of Divine things. Gentlemen in a land like ours, where, in ſpite of themſelves, their nature and reaſon is enlightened and directed in a conſiderable degree by Revelation, may talk of the perfection and ſufficiency of nature and reaſon.

If we look into thoſe nations, which are perfect ſtrangers to Revelation, we ſhall find them groſsly ignorant of the being, unity, and perfections of God, the diſpenſations of his Providence, the proper honor and worſhip that is due to him, the prayers we may addreſs to his goodneſs, and the hopes we may entertain of his acceptance. They know nothing of the pardon of ſin, the promiſes of God's mercy and bleſſing, nor of any thing belonging to the covenant of his love, the preſent privileges, or future glory of his kingdom. The reſurrection from the dead, the day of judgment, the immortal life, which will be the reward of piety and virtue, and the death everlaſting, which will be the ſad lot of all the impenitently wicked, they are altogether, or in a great meaſure, unacquainted with. But all theſe are great principles in religion, and of great force to purify our ſpirits, ennoble our minds, animate our hopes, and guard us againſt the influence of bodily appetites, and the violence of temptation.

And however others may fare, in a great degree of darkneſs and ignorance, through the favourable allowance of God, yet ſurely every man's reaſon will tell him, that ſuperior knowledge, and a more extenſive view of the Divine diſpenſations, is abſolutely neceſſary to a higher degree of goodneſs, comfort, obedience, and devotedneſs to God. What the poets relate may be true, that ſome primitive mortals ſubſiſted only upon acorns and water, in dens and caves; and we know there are ſome parts of the world where the naked inhabitants enjoy very few conveniences of life; but ſhall we therefore deſpiſe the bleſſings of agriculture, and the various accommodations which make life happy and comfortable, and ſay they are needleſs? Would any man in *England* ever think of turning out naked into the fields and woods, becauſe it is poſſible, and may ſomewhere in fact be true, that men may live upon wild fruit and water, without clothes, or any habitation, but the dens and caves of the earth? Corn and other agreable food, clothes, and commodious habitations, fited up with proper furniture and utenſils, are neceſſary to our kind and degree of life in the natural world; and ſo is Revelation to a correſponding kind and degree of ſpiritual life. The food,

food, raiment, and habitations we enjoy are the gift of God's goodneſs, and it is our duty to accept and uſe them with thankfulneſs. In like manner, Revelation is the gift of God, and, as ſuch, it ought to be received; and as it gives greater light, we are obliged to attend accordingly to it, becauſe we muſt, in the nature of things, be accountable for it.

I may add upon this head, that however nature and reaſon, in their pure and moſt perfect ſtate, may be ſufficient to direct in the way of duty, yet when nature is corrupted, and reaſon obſcured, or almoſt quite extinguiſhed, they are by no means ſufficient to reſtore and recover themſelves to the knowledge and obedience of the truth; becauſe they themſelves, who ſhould be the phyſician to heal themſelves, are ſick and diſabled. But it was the primary intention of Revelation to reſtore and preſerve the knowledge of God and of his will in a corrupt and degenerate world.

So far therefore I ſee no Objection againſt Revelation, but it may be both very needful, and a very great bleſſing to mankind.

It may be ſaid——*If this bleſſing was given to all mankind, who all equally ſtand in need of it; but whereas it is confined only to a part of mankind, while others are left to grope in the dark, how can it be accounted the gift of Divine goodneſs? For is not God equally the God, Father, and Saviour of all men? How then can it be conſiſtent with his beneficence to confine the light of Revelation to ſome, which would ſo much contribute to the happineſs of all? May we not then conclude, that a partial Revelation is no Revelation from God, nor worthy of our regard?*

I anſwer——It is very certain that God is the Saviour of all men, that he is good to all, and that his tender mercies are over all his works. But while we are ſure of this, we are not equally ſure that our reaſon is a perfect rule for adjuſting the diſtribution of his benefits. On the other hand, we may be very ſure that it is not. From the loweſt to the higheſt degree of exiſtence, from a grain of ſand, to the moſt glorious Angel in heaven, every higher degree of being is an inconteſtible proof, that God may very juſtly, according to his own wiſdom and good pleaſure, beſtow what gifts, endowments, privileges, and advantages upon his creatures he ſees fit. He is debtor to none. Our underſtanding is no meaſure of his wiſdom, neither are his diſpenſations to be cenſured by our narrow and imperfect judgments. And methinks, we may as well make it an Objection againſt the goodneſs of Divine Providence, that all men are not rich alike, wiſe alike, or knowing and learned alike.

Would you not think him a very fooliſh man, who ſhould be diſpleaſed that God has made him rich, and placed him in eaſy circumſtances, becauſe there are many about him in a poor low condition? Who refuſes wealth, or objects againſt plenty, becauſe his neighbours are pinched, and make but a hard ſhift to get a living? Or who can be ſo abſurd, as to reckon his ſuperior knowledge and learning to be no valuable advantage, becauſe there are numbers of illiterate perſons, who are much below him in underſtanding? Or that the poſſeſſion of reaſon is no bleſſing, becauſe there are ſo many idiots to be found among mankind? Or can you ſuppoſe there are any of the angelic body, or of thoſe

ſpirits who excel us in all endowments and happineſs, who deſpiſe their own bleſſings and heavenly felicity, as no gifts of the Divine bounty, becauſe we in this earth, are not ſet upon a level with them? And is it not as fooliſh and abſurd to deny Revelation, or to argue againſt it, as improperly beſtowed, and unworthy of the Divine goodneſs, becauſe indeed it is not communicated to all the world, as well as to ourſelves? It is very unnatural to diſpute againſt God's goodneſs in any ſhape, and very preſumptuous to direct him how to beſtow it either as to quantity, quality, or extent. If it is fact, that he has given us any bleſſing, our duty ſurely is to be thankful, and to enjoy and improve it, whether he has beſtowed more or leſs upon our fellow-creatures; being certain where leſs is given, leſs will be required; and that the Judge of the whole earth, will, in the laſt day, deal with all in perfect equity and goodneſs. But,

If Revelation is ſuch a bleſſing, ſurely it would appear in the fruit or effects of it. Whereas great numbers, if not the generality of thoſe who enjoy Revelation, are as bad as the very heathen, who are ſtrangers to it. And ſuch evils have been produced, ſuch variance, diſcord, and bloody perſecutions, on account of revealed religion, that it may juſtly be queſtioned, whether it has not done more harm than good. What reaſon then have we to ſay, it is a valuable gift, or worthy of the Father of the univerſe?

To this I reply——That natural cauſes by a ſort of neceſſity produce their proper effects; ſo fire always burns combuſtible matter, and a good medicine heals a diſeaſe; and that is no fire which will not burn proper matter, nor that a good medicine, which never heals a diſeaſe. But moral cauſes are of a different nature, becauſe their efficacy depends upon the choice and diſpoſition of the ſubjects to whom they are applied. And therefore a moral means, or cauſe, may be in itſelf moſt excellent, though it happens to produce no good effect; nay, though accidentally it may prove the occaſion of very bad effects. Our Lord's miniſtry and doctrine was perfectly divine, and yet it had but ſmall influence for good upon the *Jewiſh* nation; nay, on the other hand, excited their malice to that degree, that they ſlew the Prince of Life.

Whatever effects therefore, Revelation may have produced in the world, ſtill it is true, that it is a valuable gift, and worthy of the Divine goodneſs. But it muſt ever be remembered, that it is abſolutely neceſſary to our receiving any benefit from Goſpel-means, that we be truly deſirous to ſhake off the yoke of ſin, and to cultivate and improve our minds in virtue and true holineſs. If therefore we expect there is any life or power provided in the Goſpel, which will anticipate our own thoughts and concerns; or that will begin to work upon our minds, and excite them to thoughtfulneſs and care, whilſt we ourſelves are thoughtleſs and unconcerned, we ſhall but deceive ourſelves. For ſure I am, there is nothing in the Goſpel that encourages ſuch an expectation; on the contrary, ſuch an expectation is utterly inconſiſtent with the grand deſign of revealing the grace and mercy of God; which is to awaken our conſciences, and to excite us to care and diligence in our ſpiritual concerns.

The notion I have juſt now mentioned, manifeſtly tends to lull us aſleep in ſecurity and indolence; and encourages to go on in the contempt

tempt of God and our own ſalvation; or in any of the paths of folly and ſin, upon a preſumption, that we can never turn out, till we are conſtrained by ſome uncertain, unaccountable act of Almighty power. True indeed, our own thoughts, deſires, and endeavours, will effect but little, without the help of Divine power; but yet, if we chooſe to live in ignorance, unbelief, or any branch of impiety and wickedneſs; if our hearts are ſo attached to the world, ſo ingroſſed by buſineſs, ſenſual pleaſures and amuſements, that we can ſpare no ſerious reflections for God, our ſouls, and a future world, I cannot ſee how we ſhould be ſaved by any grace, which the Goſpel has provided in Jeſus Chriſt.

It is certain, the Goſpel hath produced many good effects, and will always do ſo, where it is received and attended to. For as for thoſe pretended Chriſtians who make it the occaſion of variance, hatred, and perſecution, we cannot, with any juſtice or propriety, ſay, that they do receive or attend to Revelation; nay, it is very certain, that in fact, they do not. Nor muſt we allow, that in Popiſh countries, where corruption of manners greatly prevails, and ſuperſtition, idolatry, and perſecution are eſtabliſhed, they enjoy the benefit of Revelation, when we know, that for many ages, the uſe of the Scriptures hath been forbiden, and a religion taught and profeſſed, which is quite foreign to the word of God.

But how can we be ſure, that we have now in poſſeſſion, thoſe very books entire and perfect, in which Revelation was originally recorded? May they not in length of time be loſt, or quite altered from what they were at firſt? Or ſo varied and changed by tranſcribers and tranſlators, that we can never be ſure that we have the true and genuine ſenſe of Scripture?

I anſwer——No nation in the world, can be more ſure of any of their publick acts and records, preſerved in their archives with the utmoſt care, than we are of the truth of the Scriptures now in our hands. The *Jews* preſerved the books of *Moſes*, as the laws of their kingdom, in the moſt ſacred part of the tabernacle and temple; thoſe books, the Pſalms and Prophets, were every where publickly read in their ſynagogues, every week on the ſabbath-day; their learned men, with the utmoſt exactneſs and ſcrupuloſity, inſpected and guarded the text, even ſo far as to count the very number of letters in every book. In ſhort, our Lord, and the Apoſtles, frequently quote *Moſes*, the *Pſalms* and *Prophets*, without any intimation, that thoſe books were in any reſpect altered or depraved. Whereas had they indeed been corrupted, we need not doubt but our bleſſed Saviour would have reformed that as well as, or rather, more than any other inſtance of corruption among the *Jews*.

From our Lord's time, the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament were publicly read by the Jews in all parts of the world; and thoſe Scriptures, and the Apoſtolic writings, as they came out, were read by Chriſtians every where in their aſſemblies, and diſperſed over all the world, where the religion of Jeſus was profeſſed; as containing the laws and rules of the religion he taught. Inſomuch that it was impoſſible to corrupt or deprave them. And for that reaſon, even the church of ROME, or thoſe who erected that Antichriſtian power, never durſt attempt to make

the leaſt alteration in the Scriptures, as knowing it would be to no purpoſe; but inſtead of that, they claimed the ſole right of interpreting the Scriptures, which ſerved their ends full as well as corrupting them. For he who hath power to put what ſenſe he pleaſes upon a law, may as effectually make it void, as he who deſtroys it.

And as for tranſcribers, or tranſlators, it is for the ſame reaſon impoſſible they ſhould make any material alterations. And it is in fact true, that they have not. For you may take any tranſlation, in any language, or by any party among Chriſtians, Papiſts as well as Proteſtants, and you will find they all agree in all things relating to the covenant of the Lord our God, and the ſeveral duties to which we are thereby obliged, though they may differ in ſome things, and Commentators may put their own ſenſe upon others. But the main things, I am well ſatisfied, have been preſerved pure and entire in every tranſlation from the begining to this day.

Thus the Objections againſt Revelation in general, which are all that I ever heard of, are removed, I hope to ſatisfaction. Upon the whole, they ſeem to me to proceed not from a ſober mind, ſincerely deſirous of the beſt knowledge and inſtruction; for how can one allow him to be a true ſcholar, or ſincerely deſirous of improving in uſeful learning, who meeting with a book excellently adapted to that purpoſe, refuſes to make uſe of it, becauſe he is already poſſeſſed of the faculty of reaſon, or becauſe it is not in the hands of every body; or becauſe ſome have made a bad uſe of it; or becauſe he doubts whether it may not have undergone ſome alterations; when the book, in itſelf conſidered, is an excellent performance, and capable of giving him the moſt profitable inſtruction?

The Bible, as we now have it in our hands, thanks be to God, is by far the moſt excellent book in our language; and as we have it in our tranſlation, is in itſelf, ſeting aſide all circumſtances, a pure and plentiful fountain of Divine knowledge, giving a true, clear, and full account of the Divine diſpenſations, and particularly of the Goſpel of our ſalvation. So that whoever ſtudies the Bible, the Engliſh Bible, is ſure of gaining the knowledge and faith, which if duely applied to the heart and converſation, will infallibly guide him to eternal life. For which reaſon it is our wiſdom and duty, to be much in reading and meditating upon the Bible, that our minds being well furniſhed with heavenly wiſdom, and our hearts tinctured with a Divine Spirit, we may be prepared for glory, honour, and immortality.

CHAP. XL.

CHAP. XL.

That the Scriptures are given by Inspiration *of God, appears from the expreſs and frequent Aſſertions of* Moſes, *the* Prophets *and* Apoſtles.

I HAVE already given a general account and hiſtory of revelation; and have ſhewn that it is perfectly conſonant to the goodneſs and love of God, to the relation in which we ſtand in to him, and the high and glorious purpoſes for which he has given us our being; and that he commited revelation to writing at a very proper time, when the ſhortneſs of human life, and the general corruption of the world, rendered tradition no longer a ſafe mean of conveyance; and when the kingdom or peculiar congregation, he had erected, required a ſtanding light for the preſervation of Divine truth.

I have likewiſe endeavoured to remove ſome objections againſt revelation in general.

On this head I would beg leave to repeat, that never were any books more publickly and commonly known, being read and heard with the greateſt reverence once every week, in both *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian* aſſemblies; for a very long tract of time, the Old Teſtament before the coming of our Lord, and the Old and New after his coming, to this very day. So that it is, in the nature of things, impoſſible that the holy Scriptures ſhould be adulterated; nor could any man, who had a mind to alter or corrupt them, promiſe himſelf ſucceſs in an attempt, which muſt immediately be detected, and confounded, by thouſands of copies every where diſperſed, and conſtantly read before numerous aſſemblies, in the various languages of even more nations, than ever compoſed the Roman empire in its largeſt extent.

Tranſcribers may indeed make literal miſtakes, but thoſe are eaſily corrected by a variety of manuſcripts; and tranſlators may differ in giving the literal ſenſe of ſome words and phraſes, but not ſo as to render the main ſubjects and ſubſtance of the Scriptures either obſcure or uncertain. For you may take any tranſlations in any language, or done by any party among Chriſtians, and you will find they all agree in all things relating to the covenant of the Lord our God, the ſtate of things in a future world, and the ſeveral duties to which we are obliged, though they may not render the letter of the text in the ſame words, nor with the ſame propriety of expreſſion. The more perfect, and exact in all things, any tranſlation is, the better it is; but I am very ſure, that all things pertaining to the diſpenſations of God, his grace and promiſes, and our hopes and duty, have been preſerved pure and entire in every tranſlation, from the begining to this day. And this is abundantly enough for our inſtruction, comfort, direction, and edification.

Gentlemen in foreign buſineſs, who do not underſtand foreign languages, are obliged to carry it on by the help of tranſlations. And if a letter in *Italian*, *German*, *Spaniſh*, or *French*, was put into the hands of twenty tranſlators, there are great odds, but every tranſlation would differ,

differ, more or leſs, in ſome expreſſions. The ſame words or phraſes would hardly be rendered in the ſame manner by every one of the tranſlators; and yet they might all agree with reſpect to the ſenſe of the merchant. And that being all his correſpondent wants to underſtand, he will never think it worth his while to enter into minute particulars, or a critical propriety of phraſes, which have nothing to do with his buſineſs. Juſt ſo it is with reference to the tranſlation of the Bible. In above the ſpace of an hundred years, learning may have received conſiderable improvements, and by that means, ſome inaccuracies may be found in a tranſlation, more than a hundred years old. But you may reſt fully ſatisfied, that as our Engliſh tranſlation is, in itſelf, by far the moſt excellent book in our language, ſo it is a pure and plentiful fountain of Divine knowledge, giving a true, clear, and full account of the Divine diſpenſations, and particularly of the Goſpel of our ſalvation; inſomuch, that whoever ſtudies the Bible, the Engliſh Bible, is ſure of gaining that knowledge and faith which, if duly applied to the heart and converſation, will infallibly guide him to eternal life.

[But you may ſay, how then comes it to paſs, that learned men differ ſo much about the ſenſe of Scripture? I anſwer. They differ not ſo much about the literal ſenſe, or tranſlation of Scripture, as about the conſtruction which they put upon the literal ſenſe. For example, all are agreed that thoſe words, *Take, Eat, this is my body, which is broken for you*, are rightly and well tranſlated; but the queſtion is, what is the meaning of them? The Papiſt will tell you, they mean, that the bread in the Lord's-ſupper is really turned into the body, ſoul, and divinity of Chriſt; the Proteſtant very juſtly denieth the monſtrous and idolatrous abſurdity, and affirms, that the bread is only a figurative repreſentation of Chriſt's ſacrificed body. Tranſlators are generally pretty well agreed, but divines differ very much about the ſenſe of Scripture, which may afterwards be conſidered.]

Thus, by demonſtrating the reaſonableneſs and expediency of revelation in general, by removing objections againſt it, and by ſhowing the ſufficiency of the tranſlation, which, thanks to God, is in all our hands, the way is prepared —

To advance a few arguments to eſtabliſh the authority and excellency of the Scriptures; that they were indeed given by Inſpiration of God, or that, in them, holy men of God ſpake as they were moved by the holy Spirit.

We have ſufficient reaſon to believe that we have in our hands the very books that were writen by *Moſes*, by the Prophets, and by the Apoſtles of Chriſt. Now that thoſe books were given by Inſpiration of God, or that the perſons who wrote them have delivered to us what they received from heaven, will appear —

From their own expreſs and frequent aſſertions. *Moſes* and the Prophets always declare they ſpake in the name of the Lord, and delivered to the people what they received in commiſſion from him; the Apoſtles likewiſe aſſure us, that they were taught by Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God, were endued with the Spirit of God, and commiſſioned by him to preach the Goſpel to all nations. And we have all the reaſon in the world to believe they have told us the truth. For if they have not, they

muſt

muſt be very bad, deſigning men, who ſolemnly and publickly fathered upon God, conſtitutions, laws, doctrines, and declarations which they knew very well were falſe and fictitious, the creatures of their own invention, obtruded upon the world to ſerve ſome ſelfiſh, ſiniſter purpoſes. But, for any thing we can ſee, they appear to be perſons of the higheſt character for honor and probity. In the whole of their conduct we find the utmoſt integrity and diſintereſtedneſs, and in every part of their hiſtory and writings the utmoſt ſimplicity and impartiality.

We may carry this argument further, and ſet it in a ſtill ſtronger light in the caſe of the *Prophets*. For if, when they declared they ſpake in the name of God, and by a commiſſion from him, they declared a falſehood, they muſt certainly know that it was a falſhood; and if they knew it was a falſhood, they were not only very wicked, but even void of common ſenſe. For the Prophets, in a long ſeries one after another, got nothing by ſpeaking in the name of the Lord, but ſcorn and contempt from the generality of their countrymen. When they entered upon the ungrateful office, they renounced all worldly views, and were harraſſed and perſecuted in proportion to their fidelity in executing it.

Now, this is too much by far for any pious fraud to bear, even in the caſe of a ſingle perſon, much more in a ſeries of ſucceſſion of men in ſeveral generations. An impoſtor, like *Mahomet*, may carry his pretences very high, but he can never bear the furnace of perſecution. That terrible ſcourge will either ſilence his falſe and arrogant claims, or force him to take up arms, if it is in his power, for his own vindication and ſecurity. But the Prophets were naked men, who, without the leaſt dependence upon worldly power or policy, oppoſed nothing but a divine commiſſion to very unkind and ſevere uſage. Now there is nothing to be found in human nature, or in any ſuppoſeable ſtate of things, that can poſſibly account for this conduct, but either, that really they had a divine commiſſion, or elſe, that they were diſordered in their heads, and had loſt their ſenſes. But their writings prove they were men of good ſenſe, and of a ſound and excellent judgment; therefore, nothing remains but that they really acted by a divine commiſſion.

The force of this argument will be ſeen even ſtill more evidently in the caſe of the *Apoſtles*. No hiſtory in the world has been better preſerved than that of the New Teſtament. There we find that Jeſus Chriſt had gathered, while he was upon earth, ſome hundreds of Diſciples, who all of them made profeſſion of faith in him immediately after his death, declaring that he was riſen from the dead, and aſcended into heaven. Particularly, the Apoſtles, with ſeveral others, went about preaching the Goſpel, firſt in *Judea*, then in all parts of the *Roman* empire, perſuading men to believe in Chriſt, affirming that he was the Son of God, that all the wonderful things related of him were true, and that they had a commiſſion from Heaven to teach, ſpread, and propagate his religion every where, though they knew they ſhould every where meet with the moſt violent oppoſition, and the cruelſt treatment. Now, they muſt either be fully convinced in their own minds that their aſſertions were true; or, if they knew that the Goſpel, and their commiſſion to preach it, was a forgery, we muſt conclude they were diſtracted,

and had loſt the uſe of underſtanding and reaſon. For, ſuppoſing our bleſſed Lord never did or ſaid any of thoſe things, which the Apoſtles repeated; and that they had no inſtructions or commiſſion from him to preach the Goſpel; then we muſt ſuppoſe, they entered into a fooliſh and frantick confederacy after this manner.

"Men and Brethren, what that ſeducer was, who lived among us "the other day, and how juſtly he ſuffered death for his vile impoſture, "we, of all men living, have moſt reaſon to know. And though others, "who were leſs intimately acquainted with him, and his ways of de- "ceiving, might have ſome opinion of his worth and honeſty, yet we, "who were the daily companions of his converſation, ſaw nothing in him "anſwerable to the greatneſs of his pretenſions, but that his deſign was, "by all the boldeſt arts of craft and hypocriſy, to get a name in the "world; and therefore let us enter into the moſt ſolemn agreement to "propagate the belief of this notorious cheat among mankind, and to "feign all manner of lies in its confirmation; to aver that we ſaw him "reſtore eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, and life to the dead; and "though it be all falſe, yet let us confidently report and aſſert it to the "very laſt drop of our blood.

"And becauſe, after all his great and glorious pretences of being no "leſs than the Son of God, he was at laſt executed as a vile malefac- "tor, with all the circumſtances of ſhame and diſhonour, we muſt "agree among ourſelves upon ſome ſtory to wipe off this diſgrace. Let "us therefore reſolve to affirm, with undaunted ſteddineſs, that after "he was thus diſhonourably crucified, the third day he roſe again; "often converſed with us, in the ſame familiar way as he had always "done before his execution; and that, after a while, we ſaw him "aſcend up into heaven. But then, we muſt be ſure to ſtand unalter- "ably to this bold falſhood, and perſevere to death itſelf in the aſſer- "tion. For what abſurdity is there in throwing away our lives with "no other proſpect than that of final perdition? And why ſhould any "man think it hard to ſuffer ſtripes, bonds, impriſonments, reproaches, "diſhonour, and death itſelf, with this view only?"

This, or ſomething like it, muſt be the ſenſe and reſolution of the Apoſtles and firſt preachers of the Goſpel, upon ſuppoſition they knew and believed, that the Goſpel, and their commiſſion to preach it, was a forgery. In this caſe, a ſet of men in private and low life, without any manner of worldly power or intereſt; in the certain proſpect of all manner of oppoſition, of ſacrificing all that is dear and valuable in life, of ſuffering all manner of indignities, tribulations, and cruelties, and of expoſing themſelves to all the terrors of death; muſt agree together to propagate throughout the whole world a ſyſtem of falſhood, knowing it to be ſuch, directly contrary to their own conſciences, and to all their intereſts both in this, and a future world.

None but a company of madmen, ſeized with the moſt extravagant frenzy, and void of all ſenſe and reaſon, could poſſibly join in ſuch a deſign. Whereas, if we peruſe their writings, we ſhall find that the Apoſtles were men of the fineſt ſenſe; not only in full poſſeſſion of underſtanding, but endowed with knowledge and wiſdom in a degree far beyond the moſt eminent philoſophers, or maſters of reaſon, that ever had

had been in the world. They had a ſurpriſing acquaintance with God and the perfections of his nature; they ſet the diſpenſations of his wiſdom, and the grand deſigns of his love, in the cleareſt and moſt amiable light; they well underſtood the whole ſyſtem of morality, and fixed every branch of it upon its proper foundation; upon principles either ſelf-evident or allowed, they demonſtrate and eſtabliſh the whole ſcheme of the Goſpel. The Apoſtles were ſo far from being void of common ſenſe, that they were, in fact, men of the beſt ſenſe, of the moſt accurate and ſublime knowledge, of the moſt excellent and Divine Spirit, next to their Lord and Maſter, that the world ever was acquainted with. Therefore their eſpouſing and aſſerting the Goſpel with ſo much zeal could not proceed from any diſorder in their heads.

There remains then, but one other cauſe to which it can poſſibly be aſſigned, and it is this, that they were fully perſuaded of the truth of what they reported. And if they were fully perſuaded of the truth of what they reported, then it follows, that what they reported was certainly true. They were fully ſatisfied that it was true, and they were perfectly capable of receiving the cleareſt evidence, and fulleſt ſatisfaction. For obſerve, what they reported was not a matter of meer opinion, as in the caſe of *ſuperſtition*, nor a warm ſuggeſtion or ſecret impulſe upon their minds, as in the caſe of *enthuſiaſm*, but bare ſimple matter of fact. *We cannot*, ſay they, *but ſpeak the things, which we have ſeen and heard.* Acts iv. 20. They were things, not which they conceited, or fancied, but which all of them, which great multitudes of all ſorts of people, had often and openly, for the ſpace of three or four years together, ſeen with their eyes, and heard with their ears. And that they were not miſtaken, or deceived, they were ſo fully ſatisfied, that they ventured all they had in the world, and life itſelf, upon the truth of what they had heard and ſeen. Conſequently, their aſſurance muſt be in the higheſt and fulleſt degree of ſatisfaction, leaving no room for doubt or uncertainty.

However ſome now a days may cavil and object, it is certain the Apoſtles, who were the familiar companions of our Lord, had not the leaſt ſcruple or difficulty about any thing related in the Goſpel. They were perfectly ſatisfied they ſaw Chriſt upon earth; that they converſed with him; that they heard the gracious words which proceeded from his mouth; that they ſaw him work all his miracles; that they ſaw him crucified and dead; that they ſaw him alive again within a few days; that they heard him give them a commiſſion to preach the Goſpel to all nations, and promiſe them ſucceſs; that they actually ſaw him aſcend up into heaven; that the Holy Ghoſt actually fell upon them on the day of Pentecoſt; and that by his influences they actually felt themſelves indowed with new and miraculous powers which accompanied them during the courſe of their miniſtry. And, to their being fully perſuaded of the truth of theſe things, and to no other poſſible cauſe, can we aſſign their ſteddy and zealous endeavours to publiſh and ſpread the Goſpel every where.

Add to all this, that the Apoſtles were ſurpriſingly ſucceſsful in preaching the Goſpel. Theſe men in private and low life, theſe defenceleſs men, quite deſtitute of all temporal power and intereſt, only by the force

of

of truth, the truth of the Goſpel which they preached, and the power which they received from their Maſter, after he was gone to heaven, encountered the fury of the multitude, the moſt inveterate prejudices of the whole world, the zeal of ſuperſtition, the hatred of the *Jews*, the contempt of the *Greeks*, the power of the *Romans*, the pride of the *philoſophers*, and the policy of *ſtateſmen*; all theſe difficulties they encountered, and ſurmounted them all. The doctrine they taught, like the ſun, inlightened the whole world, in a manner, all at once; and infinite multitudes of people, both from cities and villages, were, by the Apoſtles preaching, brought into the church, like corn into a granary.

All this, taken together, amounts to a ſufficient proof, that the Apoſtles are to be credited when they affirm, that they received their inſtructions and commiſſion from the Son of God; and upon the foot of this argument alone, I am, for my own part, as fully convinced that the Apoſtles were inſpired by the Spirit of God, and that they have in their writings infallibly delivered the truth, in all things pertaining to the Chriſtian faith and doctrine, as I am of any mathematical propoſition, or that twice two is equal to four. The proof indeed is of a different kind, but fully convincing and ſatisfactory.

And if our Lord came from God to teach us the truth, and if his Apoſtles received from him their inſtructions, commiſſion, and the holy Spirit, then it follows, that the books of *Moſes*, and of the Prophets, are undoubtedly the word of God, and that the ſacred hiſtory may be depended upon as a true account of things; for thoſe books are not only aſſerted by our Lord, and his Apoſtles, in general, to be the word of God, given by Divine inſpiration, and a true rule of knowledge, faith, and doctrine, but particular paſſages are frequently produced in proof or confirmation of the doctrine they taught; and almoſt every ſingle part of the hiſtory, from the begining to the end, as of *Adam*, *Enoch*, *Noah*, the *Deluge*, *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, *Abraham*, the *Iſraelites*, and their miraculous deliverance from *Egypt* and ſettlement in the land of *Canaan*, and all the ſurpriſing events in their ſtory, are refered to as true and authentic.

What Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles have reported and taught in the books of the New Teſtament, is certainly the truth, as they received it from God. And if ſo, then the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament are alſo given by inſpiration of God, a ſtorehouſe of ſacred and religious knowledge, of undoubted credit and veracity, for our Lord and his Apoſtles have repreſented and eſtabliſhed them as ſuch.

Thus the frequent and expreſs aſſertions of *Moſes*, the *Prophets*, and the *Apoſtles*, taken in connection with their proper circumſtances, is a proof of the truth of revelation as it ſtands in the Scriptures.

Let me recommend it to your ſerious conſideration, that we certainly have in our hands an ineſtimable treaſure, a revelation from heaven, a ſure word of prophecy, ſhining as a light in a dark place, a magazine of the moſt excellent knowledge, clearly diſplaying the Divine nature and perfections, opening fully the diſpenſations of his wiſdom and goodneſs from the begining of the world; ſhewing the riches of his grace and love to mankind, delivering the moſt excellent precepts of wiſdom, truth,

truth, and holineſs, for the purifying our hearts, and directing our converſation, and propoſing the nobleſt motives to ingage us to, and incourage us in, the practice of all virtue and goodneſs. We cannot over-value this bleſſing, neither can we deſpiſe it without great guilt. We are accountable to God for the uſe we make of it. Let us eſteem it in proportion to its worth, and ſtudy it as the rule of our life, as the grand ſource of our comfort and hope, and as an infallible guide to eternal glory.

CHAP. XLI.

The Divine Original and Authority of the Scriptures, proved from the Harmony and Agreement of the ſeveral WRITERS *of them.*

HAVING gone through the firſt argument, I proceed——To prove the Divine Original and Authority of the Scriptures; which we may do from the Harmony and Agreement of the ſeveral Writers of them.

They are not a book compiled by a ſingle author, nor by many hands acting in confederacy in the ſame age; in which caſe there would be no difficulty in compoſing a conſiſtent ſcheme, nor would it be any wonder to find the ſeveral parts in a juſt and cloſe connection; but the Scriptures were done by ſeveral hands, in very different conditions of life, from the throne and ſcepter down to the loweſt degree, and in very diſtant ages, through the long ſpace of about 1500 years, when the world muſt have put on a quite new face, and men muſt have different intereſts to purſue; which naturally would have led a ſpirit of impoſture to have varied its ſchemes, and to have adapted them to different ſtations in the world, and to the different turns and changes in every age.

David wrote about 400 years after *Moſes*, and *Iſaiah* about 250 after *David*, and *Matthew* more than 700 years after *Iſaiah*. And yet theſe authors, with all the other Prophets and Apoſtles, write in perfect Harmony, confirming the Authority of their predeceſſors, labouring to reduce the people to the obſervance of their inſtructions, and loudly exclaiming againſt the neglect and contempt of them, and denouncing the ſevereſt judgments upon ſuch as continued diſobedient.

This was the principal work of the Prophets in a long ſucceſſion. And it is well known our Lord came not to deſtroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil, *i. e.* to vindicate and illuſtrate their meaning, to compleat what was imperfect, and to anſwer the higheſt ends of what was typical and figurative. Now this is a very ſtrong proof, that the Scriptures were throughout dictated by one and the ſame ſpirit, which could be no other than the Spirit of God, and of truth. It is allowed, as in the caſe of *Mahometiſm*, that an impoſture, or religious fraud, may be

be handed down from one age to another, but not by ſeveral different perſons, all making equal pretenſions to a Divine authority and commiſſion. For in this caſe they are to be conſidered, not as a ſucceſſion of teachers, deriving their doctrine from one common original, but as ſingle and diſtinct impoſtors; and conſequently, every one in a diſtant age, and in a quite different ſtate of things, would ſet up for himſelf, and ſeek a ſingular glory by building upon a diſtinct and ſeparate foundation from others. It would ſignify little to an impoſtor, who has no other intention but to advance his own honor and renown, to pretend a commiſſion from heaven, only to give reputation to another deceiver, by confirming what he has already eſtabliſhed.

Therefore as the Writers of the holy Scriptures, though they all claim a Divine Authority, yet write in perfect connection and Harmony, mutually confirming the doctrine and teſtimony of each other, and concuring to eſtabliſh the very ſame religious truths and principles, it is a ſtrong proof that they all derive their inſtructions from the ſame fountain, the wiſdom of God, and were indeed under the direction and illumination of his Spirit.

We may take another argument from ourſelves, as we make profeſſion of faith in *Jeſus Chriſt*. For our profeſſion of Chriſtianity, who dwell in the uttermoſt parts of the earth, is a proof that the Goſpel ſpread itſelf over all the *Roman* empire; for, from *Jeruſalem*, it came to us by a gradual progreſs, and advancing from one country to another, arrived at length in theſe iſlands of *Great-Britain* and *Ireland*. No body can doubt or deny that the Chriſtian faith is, and for many ages paſt has been, embraced in all thoſe numerous and diſtant lands, which once compoſed the *Roman* empire, and even in countries far beyond the utmoſt bounds thereof. In all theſe ſpatious tracts the Chriſtian faith, in one form or other, has been profeſſed; and baptiſm and the Lord's-ſupper, in one form or other, have been adminiſtered, in a ſucceſſion of ages, quite up to the times of the Apoſtles, and of our Lord.

It is moſt certain that baptiſm and the Lord's-ſupper, thoſe ſummaries of the whole Goſpel, were not inſtituted in any following age, by any one party of Chriſtians, but have been handed down to us, and to all parties among Chriſtians, from the very mouth and inſtitution of *Jeſus Chriſt*. No fact can be more evident than this. From our Lord therefore, and his Apoſtles, the Goſpel ſpread over the greateſt part of the known world, which before the publication of the Goſpel was univerſally involved in idolatry, eſtabliſhed by long cuſtom and human laws, ſtrongly guaranteed by all the power and learning of the world, by all the zeal of the wildeſt ſuperſtition, by all the violence and obſtinacy of prejudice, by all the blindneſs of profound ignorance, and all the incorrigible perverſeneſs of corrupt and diſſolute manners. A complication of cauſes which would for ever have bid defiance to any philoſophy or wiſdom of the few that can be ſuppoſed to attain a better ſenſe in the midſt of univerſal darkneſs and depravity. But the Goſpel gained a moſt compleat and extenſive victory over all theſe, demoliſhed every idol in the heathen world, and every where erected the trophies of a conquering *Jeſus*.

Now this ſurpriſing change, which is notorious to all mankind, muſt be

be effected either by human power and policy, or by a divine and ſupernatural influence. By human power and policy great revolutions have been brought about in all ages and parts of the world. And therefore we do not wonder at the ſpread of the *Mahometan* or *Turkiſh* religion, as it was propagated by the ſword, under the conduct of a mighty warrior and politician, who by ravages, bloodſhed, and deſolations, conquered many nations and kingdoms, laid the foundation of a potent and ſpacious empire, and thus by violence opened a way for the reception, and extenſive profeſſion of his newly deviſed religion. But the religion of *Jeſus* was triumphant, not only without the aid of human power or policy, but even in direct oppoſition to it.

For the plain fact is this. A poor young man, about 30 years of age, called *Jeſus*, a carpenter's ſon, of no education or learning, without houſe or habitation, without the leaſt human intereſt or influence, begins to preach up reformation among the *Jews*, the moſt ſuſpicious and bigotted people in the world; declares himſelf the Son of God, gathers a few Diſciples, perſons in the ſame low and naked condition with himſelf, fiſhermen, publicans, and ſuch like, and ſends them about preaching, what he called the Goſpel of the kingdom of God. He was deſpiſed by the generality, and greatly oppoſed and harraſſed by the men of power and learning. However, he ſhifted for himſelf as well as he could; but after he had preached three or four years, they caught him and crucified him as an infamous malefactor.

This direful event, which would have totally ruined an impoſtor, he plainly foreſaw and foretold; but not in the leaſt diſcouraged by the proſpect, he ordered his Diſciples to go and preach his Goſpel over all the world, promiſing that after his death he would aſſiſt them with power from heaven, in virtue of which they ſhould certainly ſucceed. They believed him, they ſet out, they preached up their crucified Maſter as the Lord and Saviour of all mankind; and, which is very ſtrange, under the conduct and influence of a maſter who was dead to this world, and gone to the other ſtate, they prevailed; and in ſpite of the fury of the multitude, the moſt inveterate prejudices of the whole world, the zeal of ſuperſtition, the hatred of the *Jews*, the contempt of the *Greeks*, the power of the *Romans*, the pride of *philoſophers*, and the policy of *ſtateſmen*, their doctrine, like the ſun, almoſt at once, enlightened the world, overthrew the whole ſyſtem of Pagan idolatry and religion, and advanced as far as our own country in the darkeſt and remoteſt corner of the earth.

Of this we ourſelves, we Chriſtians, are living monuments and proofs; we have received the Goſpel, we own it a glorious and ſhining light, we have renounced the idolatry and vain converſation of our fathers, we acknowledge and worſhip the living and true God, we confeſs and adore the crucified Jeſus, our king and head, and hope for eternal life through him. Now, there is no poſſible way of accounting for this, but by allowing that *Jeſus* really was the Son of God, that he really roſe again from the dead, and aſcended up into heaven, and that he actually from thence ſent his Diſciples the aids and powers which he had promiſed, and which were ſo far above all that is human, that they carried their own

evidence along with them, and rendered their doctrine ſo ſurpriſingly ſucceſsful.

And as *Jeſus* did not ſend his Diſciples to preach to all the world, till after his death, and as he then, after his death, did actually furniſh them with all miraculous powers to render their doctrine effectual, this is the moſt convincing proof that his doctrine was divine, and that he himſelf was actually gone to heaven, and lived there in the higheſt intereſt and favor with God. For that an impoſtor, a deceiver, hateful to the God of truth, ſhould, after his death, be able to animate, inſtruct, authorize, and impower a company of men, otherwiſe deſtitute of all aſſiſtance, and labouring under all poſſible difficulties, to throw down all the religions of the world, and to erect a new one in their ſtead, is utterly impoſſible. It is therefore certain, beyond all doubt, that *Jeſus Chriſt* was ſent from heaven to reveal the Goſpel to the world. And as we are very ſure that we have in our hands the writings of his Apoſtles, we may be as ſure, that they contain a revelation from heaven, or that doctrine, which *Chriſt* received from God, and delivered to his Diſciples. And if ſo, then the writings of the Old Teſtament are alſo the word of God, for *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles declare them to be ſuch. Therefore all Scripture is given by inſpiration of God.

The ſame thing may be proved by the long train of miraculous operations, which could be effected only by a Divine power, and which were wrought in confirmation of the miſſion of Prophets and Apoſtles; as alſo from the ſpirit of prophecy predicting future events at a great diſtance of time, which no human wiſdom or ſagacity could poſſibly foreſee, and yet were actually and punctually fulfilled in correſpondence to the prediction. But as a minute detail of particulars would perhaps be ſomewhat tedious, I ſhall ſingle out one inſtance of the Divine miraculous power, and the truth of the prophetic ſpirit; which inſtance has been in all ages a ſtanding proof of revelation, and which ſtill exiſts, and is before the eyes of the preſent generation, in almoſt all countries of the world; I mean, the preſent ſtate and being of the *Jews*. For this people, as they were originally choſen to be the repoſitory, or ſtore-houſe of Divine knowledge, by the revelation which was given to them, ſo they were alſo intended to be viſible proofs of the truth of it in all ages and parts of the world. Our Lord, contrary to all human probability, while he was on earth, foretold the deſtruction of the Jewiſh temple and polity, and their diſperſion among all nations, which was exactly accompliſhed in about 40 years after. And in this diſperſed ſtate they have now continued about 1700 years, in great numbers, and in great ignominy and contempt, and yet quite diſtinct and ſeparate from all the people among whom they lived.

This appears to me a ſtanding miracle; nor can we attribute it to any other cauſe, but the will and extraordinary interpoſition of heaven, when it is conſidered, that of all the famous nations of the world, who might have been diſtinguiſhed from others with great advantage, and the moſt illuſtrious marks of honor and renown, as the ancient *Egyptians*, *Aſſyrians*, *Perſians*, *Macedonians*, *Romans*, who all in their turns held the empire of the world, and were, with great ambition, the lords of mankind;

mankind; yet theſe, even in their own countries, are diſſolved into the bulk of mankind, nor is there a perſon upon earth can boaſt he is deſcended from thoſe renowned and imperial anceſtors.

Whereas a ſmall nation, generally deſpiſed and hated, and which, though now upon pretty good terms with us, both *Pagans* and pretended *Chriſtians* have for many ages treated with the utmoſt inſult, indignity, outrage and cruelty, and which therefore one would imagine, every ſoul that belonged to it ſhould have gladly diſowned, and have been willing to have loſt the odious name by mixing with any other nation; yet, I ſay, this hated people, harraſſed and butchered more or leſs by all mankind, baniſhed and bandyed from one country to another, and who ſcarce had any peace till trade and traffic brought the world to a better temper, and more favourable treatment of them: I ſay, this hated people have, under all temptations to the contrary, and againſt the ordinary courſe of things, continued in a body *diſtinct* and *ſeparate* from all mankind, even in a ſtate of diſperſion, for about 1700 years.

This demonſtrates, that the wiſdom which formed them into a peculiar people, that they have almoſt ever ſince the deluge, for about 3600 years, remained in a diſtinct and ſeparate ſtate, and are ſtill likely to do ſo, is not human but Divine. For no human wiſdom or power could form, or however could execute, ſuch a vaſt, extenſive deſign. It muſt be the wiſdom and power of that God alone, who is the ſame in every age, and who in every age has exerciſed a peculiar Providence over his peculiar people, the deſcendents of *Abraham* his ſervant. And thus the preſent ſtate and being of the *Jews* is every where a publick and ſtanding evidence of the truth of revelation, in two reſpects.

1. With reſpect to their long diſperſion, or captivity, as they call it, and the various calamities they were to ſuffer therein.

This is foretold in ſeveral places, particularly, *Deut.* xxviii. 63, 64, 65. *The Lord will rejoice over you to deſtroy you, and bring you to nought,* as to their ſingular privileges and enjoyments; *and ye ſhall be plucked off from the land, whither ye go to poſſeſs it. And the Lord ſhall ſcatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other——and among thoſe nations thou ſhalt find no eaſe, neither ſhall the ſole of thy foot have reſt; but the Lord ſhall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing eyes, and ſorrow of mind.* Ezek. xxxvi. 19. *I ſcattered them among the heathen, and they were diſperſed among the countries. I will ſcatter thee among the heathen, and diſperſe thee among the countries.* And our Lord predicts, *Luke* xxi. 24. *And they,* the Jews, *ſhall fall by the edge of the ſword, and ſhall be led away captive into all nations, and Jeruſalem ſhall be trodden down of the Gentiles.*

2. With reſpect to their being preſerved in their diſperſion, and preſerved as a diſtinct and ſeparate body, this alſo was plainly predicted. *Deut.* xxvi. 44. *Yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not caſt them away, neither will I abhor them, to deſtroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them.* Jer. xxx. 10, 11. *Fear not, O my ſervant, Jacob; neither be diſmayed, O Iſrael; for lo, I will ſave thee from afar, and thy ſeed from the land of their captivity; for though I make a full end of all nations, whither I have ſcattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of*

thee. Jer. xxxi. 10. *Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the iſles afar off; and ſay, he that ſcattered Iſrael will gather him, and keep him, as a ſhepherd doth his flock.* Ver. 35, 36, 37. *Thus ſaith the Lord, who gives the ſun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the ſtars for a light by night; who divides the ſea when the waves thereof rore; the Lord of Hoſts is his name. If theſe ordinances depart from before me, ſaith the Lord, then the ſeed of Iſrael alſo ſhall ceaſe from being a nation before me for ever. Thus ſaith the Lord, if heaven above can be meaſured, and the foundations of the earth ſearched out beneath, I will alſo caſt off all the ſeed of Iſrael, for all that they have done, ſaith the Lord.* Rom. xi. 25, 26. *Blindneſs in part is happened to Iſrael, until the fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in; and ſo all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved; as it is writen, there ſhall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and ſhall turn away ungodlineſs from Jacob.*

Theſe, and many more paſſages, too numerous to be now quoted, plainly ſhew that it was the deſign of Divine Providence to preſerve the Jewiſh nation, in their diſperſion, and to preſerve them a diſtinct and ſeparate people in order to their future reſtoration. And we, and many other nations, at this day, ſee theſe predictions made good in the preſent ſtate of the *Jews*, who have been ſo long, and ſtill are miraculouſly preſerved ſeparate from all other people. Now this is, in my opinion, a ſtanding miracle, a wonderful work of Divine Providence, and as ſtrong a proof of revelation, as if we were to ſee the dead, every year, riſe out of their graves in confirmation of it. For we have ſtill among us, after ſo long a time, and ſo many various revolutions in human affairs, the peculiar people, whom God, above three thouſand years ago, ſeparated unto himſelf; the very people who are the principal ſubject of revelation, and who are ſaid there to be the principal objects of his Providence, and we ſee them at this day to be ſo in a very ſurpriſing manner.

Therefore in their preſent ſtate we may plainly read the ancient promiſe made to *Abraham*, the head and root of the nation, the many wonderful works wrought for them from firſt to laſt, and the truth of prophetic predictions; in the preſent ſtate of the *Jews* we may read the truth of the Goſpel, for the rejection of which God rejected them, and ſcattered them over the face of the earth. In ſhort, we are ſure there was ſuch a people as the *Jews*, to whom God delivered the revelation of his will in ancient times, for this very people exiſt among us at this day, and preſerve among them that very revelation, with the moſt ſacred and religious care. And we are ſure the numerous predictions of Scripture, both in the Old and New Teſtament, relating to their future ſtate, are true, for we ſee them made good in the preſent ſtate of the *Jews*; and therefore we may be as ſure that the holy Scriptures are given by inſpiration of God; for only the Spirit of God could foretel ſuch events; and the ſame Spirit which foretold theſe events, ſpake in the Prophets and Apoſtles, and inſpired them with all that Divine wiſdom and knowledge which we find in all their writings.

I might add the long apoſtacy, and general corruption of the profeſſors of Chriſtianity, ſo plainly foretold, and under ſuch expreſs and particular characters, in the Apoſtolic writings. This all the world may ſee has been abundantly fulfilled in the church of ROME. Now, only the

the Spirit of God could foreſee ſuch a diſtant, and deplorable ſtate of things, which no human probability could have conjectured would have riſen out of the pure and heavenly doctrine of Chriſt. But the Spirit which predicted this event, is the very ſame which was poured out upon the Apoſtles, and enlightened their minds with the knowledge of the Goſpel; therefore the Apoſtles, who wrote the New Teſtament, had the Spirit of God, and were enlightened by it.

By theſe arguments I am pointing out to you the only fountain of life and happineſs, a mine infinitely more valuable than of gold and precious ſtones; a plentiful magazine of heavenly and everlaſting wealth, an inexhauſtible fund of ſolid comfort and peace, the holy Scriptures, the word of the ever bleſſed God; a treaſure of immenſe value, which we have in our poſſeſſion, if we are wiſe to make a right improvement of it.

There remains yet another argument to prove the Divine Authority and Original of Scripture, taken from the internal excellency of it. This I ſhall conſider in the following chapter.

CHAP. XLII.

The internal Worth and Excellency of the SCRIPTURES *conſidered, as containing the beſt Principles of Knowledge, Holineſs, and Comfort.*

THE arguments which I have already advanced, are taken from the external evidence that the Scriptures are the word of God. Proceed we now to conſider their internal Worth and Excellency, which more fully and directly demonſtrates their Divine original, and falls in with the ſecond part of my deſign, which was to conſider the uſe and importance of the holy Scriptures.

Conſidering the Scriptures as a gift and bleſſing from God, the Father of lights and the Fountain of all good, for our improvement in knowledge and holineſs, in order to our being advanced to eternal glory and happineſs, we may in general conclude, that the Scriptures are in worth and uſefulneſs fully proportionable to the wiſdom and goodneſs of the Donor, and to the noble and beneficent end for which they are intended. They are a glorious diſplay of heavenly light, irradiating the darkneſs of the world, which otherwiſe would have been involved in the blackeſt night of ignorance. Let it be obſerved to the honor of the Bible, that it is the book, which, under the Divine Providence, has preſerved in the world the knowledge of the one true God, which otherwiſe muſt have been loſt and extinguiſhed. For when God in his infinite wiſdom was pleaſed to call *Abraham*, and ſeparate his family to the purpoſes of revelation, idolatry, even in thoſe early days, not long after

the flood, was ſo far ſpread, that even *Abraham*'s family were idolaters, and ſerved other gods. And ſo far did the corruption of religion prevail, that all nations, loſing the true idea of the one God and Father of all, fell into the fouleſt idolatry, the groſſeſt ſuperſtition, and all the abominable vices in connection with them, except the nation of the *Jews*, who enjoyed the word and revelation of God. And it was the word and revelation of God, at the time our Saviour came into the world, which inlightened the *Gentiles*, and ſo generally reduced them to the worſhip and obedience of the everlaſting *Jehovah*, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

What knowledge of the living God, what deteſtation of idol-worſhip, what belief of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhment, MAHOMET has propagated in the world, he received partly from *Jews*, and partly from *Chriſtians*, who had learnt thoſe things from revelation; though, as he could not read himſelf, with much confuſion, and a large mixture of fiction and falſhood. Is any part of the Chriſtian world ſunk into ſuperſtition and idolatry? It is becauſe they have ſhut up the Scriptures, forbiden the free uſe of them, and commanded the people under pain of damnation to follow other guides. Is any part of the Chriſtian world reformed from the groſs errors, and monſtrous corruptions of Popery? It is becauſe they have aſſerted the authority of the Scriptures, reſumed the uſe of them, and opened them again to free and common peruſal. Nay further—Is the Deiſt, or the man, who in a Chriſtian land denies or diſparages revelation, acquainted with the firſt cauſe, the Fountain of all being, power, life, and happineſs, the univerſal Sovereign? Has he a clear idea of the ſyſtem of duties which we owe to our Maker, and to one another; or any expectation of a future ſtate of felicity? It is becauſe he has lighted his twinkling candle at this reſplendent Sun, which he unnaturally, ungratefully, and weakly endeavours to extinguiſh. I ſay *weakly*, becauſe this Sun, which God, ever ſince the creation of his church and kingdom, has cauſed to ſhine in the moral world, ſhall by his Providence be preſerved, and ſhine with a growing luſtre, ſo long as the ſun in the firmament ſhall endure.

Under God, it muſt be owned the inſtrumental cauſe of all the true religion and piety, that is to be found in the world, which, for aught we can ſee, notwithſtanding all the philoſophy and wiſdom of man, would have been totally loſt among all the nations; and it ſhall be eſtabliſhed more and more, it ſhall ſhine forth more and more, it ſhall be honoured more and more, in the truth of its doctrines, in the wiſdom of its precepts and inſtructions, in the accompliſhment of its predictions and promiſes, and in the appearing of our Lord at the laſt day, to receive into his joy all that know God, and obey his Goſpel. It ſhall be eſtabliſhed, it ſhall ſhine, it ſhall be honoured, when thoſe, who now deſpiſe and diſparage it, ſhall be confounded and periſh for ever.

Thus much may be truly ſaid of the uſefulneſs of Scripture in general; which gives it infinitely the preference to all books of meer human compoſure, that it has been the means of preſerving in the world the grand principles of religion, the knowledge of the being and perfections

of

of God, and of that true ſpiritual worſhip, which alone pleaſes him, and ennobles, purifies, and comforts our ſouls. And juſt in proportion as the Bible is received, eſteemed, and diligently ſtudied, true religion has prevailed, and will always prevail and flouriſh. On the other hand, in proportion as the Scriptures are unknown, neglected, abuſed, and perverted, ignorance, idolatry, irreligion, error, ſuperſtition, and wickedneſs, have and will ſpread their gloom, and more or leſs infect nations and particular perſons.

The Scriptures contain principles, which muſt be allowed to be of a ſuperior and moſt excellent kind. The beſt principles of knowledge, holineſs, and comfort.

In the Scriptures we find the beſt principles of knowledge. There the mind expatiates in a boundleſs field of heavenly light, and clearly views the proſpects of truth, where the eye of meer nature could never have penetrated. There you ſee the being of God aſſerted, his nature and perfections, his glorious Majeſty, and univerſal Sovereignty deſcribed with the juſteſt propriety of ſentiment, and magnificence of language. There you read——"That the everlaſting God, the Lord, "the Poſſeſſor of all being, of all wiſdom and power, made the earth "and created man upon it; that he ſtretched out the heavens, and com- "manded all their hoſts. He meaſured the waters in the hollow of his "hand, and meted out the heavens with a ſpan, and comprehended the "duſt of the earth in a meaſure, and weighed the mountains in ſcales, "and the hills in a ballance. He toucheth the mountains, and they "ſmoke, he looks upon the earth, and it trembleth. Behold, the na- "tions are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the ſmall duſt of "the earth. Behold, he takes up the iſles as a very little thing. All "nations are before him as nothing, and they are counted to him as leſs "than nothing and vanity.

"The whole univerſe reſts wholly upon his arm, and is entirely ſub- "ject to the diſpoſals of his will. Lift up your eyes on high, and be- "hold, who has created theſe things, that brings out their hoſt by num- "ber? He calls them all by name, by the greatneſs of his might, for "that he is ſtrong in power, not one of them fails; in underſtanding "he is infinite; he is mighty in wiſdom, wonderful in counſel, and ex- "cellent in working. He fills heaven and earth, nor can any hide "himſelf in ſecret places from his all-penetrating eye. The earth is "full of his glory and riches; and his Providence is perpetually exer- "ciſed about all and every one of his creatures. All power belongs to "him, he can help and caſt down, he can ſave and deſtroy, and nothing "is too hard for the Lord. God is love; the Lord is good and doth "good, he is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works; "he is daily loading us with benefits. The righteous he will bleſs, to "them he will give grace and glory, and even to the wicked the Lord "is plenteous and rich in mercy. He is a God of truth, and without "iniquity, juſt and right is he. He is glorious in holineſs, and of pu- "rer eyes than to behold evil, neither can he look on iniquity. And "this God, ſo great, ſo glorious, is our God, our Maker, Owner, and "Ruler, our Father, Shepherd, and Friend."

This is the doctrine of Scripture; and a ſentence or two in this holy

book will give you much clearer conceptions of God than all the volumes of philoſophy, wrote by ſtrangers to revelation. There you are taught the various diſpenſations of the Divine wiſdom and goodneſs, from the begining of the world to this day, and even to the end of time. There you ſee the excellent ſchemes which he has formed for the inſtruction, reformation, and happineſs of the children of men; and we read with pleaſure the numerous inſtances of his favor to the righteous, and with dread the terrors of his vengeance upon the wicked. There we find a twofold covenant, of works, which threatens death to every tranſgreſſion; of grace, which grants the benefit of repentance and pardon; and promiſes all needful ſupplies of ſtrength to the ſincere and upright. There we learn how he erected a kingdom among the nations, or a peculiar congregation, to prevent the univerſal corruption of the world, and, like a beacon upon a hill, to diffuſe the light of Divine knowledge in the darkneſs of the earth. At length we ſee the Meſſiah, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, appear, to take away ſin, to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs, or ſalvation, to illuſtrate the grace of God, and give the plaineſt explications of his will and our duty; to ſhew the future world in the cleareſt and moſt awful view, and to appoint the moſt powerful means to attract our hearts to God, and to guide our feet into the ways of peace.

In his Goſpel we ſee the dead, ſmall and great, reſtored to life, and appearing before his judgment-ſeat, to receive a ſentence according to what they have done in the body. There he has opened the glories of heaven to our ſight, and ſhewn to our faith the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, the aſſured conſequence of patient continuance in well-doing; he has alſo uncovered the bottomleſs pit, the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever, which will be the terrible portion of all impenitent workers of iniquity. In the Scriptures the ſtate of the church to the end of the world is deſcribed, and we ſee the preſent ſtate of things correſpondent to prophetic deſcriptions.

I ſhould exceed my bounds only to mention the ſeveral heads of inſtruction and knowledge with which the word of God is crowded. I ſhall mention but one more, and that is the deſign of our preſent being in this world, which is there repreſented, agreably to the appearances of things, and the wiſdom and goodneſs of God, to be not for enjoyment, but for trial; not to gain temporal pleaſures or poſſeſſions, but to diſcipline our ſouls, and to prepare them for immortal honor and glory. In particular, the many afflictions incident to our frailty, are ſet in a true and encouraging light, as the diſcipline and correction of our heavenly Father; not for our deſtruction, but for our improvement in holineſs, to purify our ſpirits from ſenſuality, to draw our regards to things heavenly and eternal, to exerciſe our faith, hope, patience, and every virtue, which is our real excellency and beſt qualification for everlaſting happineſs. This is a brief and very imperfect ſpecimen of Scripture doctrine; which, even in this curſory view, aſſiſted a little with ſober reflection, muſt, to an impartial judgment, moderately acquainted with what the wiſeſt of Pagans have taught, appear infinitely ſuperior to the darkneſs and uncertainty of meer human knowledge and wiſdom.

In the Scriptures you will find the beſt principles of *holineſs*, or of that ſtate

ſtate of mind whereby we are habitually devoted to God and truth. For there we are ſhewn the dignity and worth of our being, vaſtly beyond any thing we could have hammered out of our own reflections. There we read that we are made in the image of God, inſpired with underſtanding, raiſed vaſtly in our faculties above the beaſts or the fowls, and made for ends proportionably grand and noble; not for the mean purpoſes of time and ſenſe, but for God, for his honor and favor, to ſhow forth his praiſe, and for ever enjoy his goodneſs. And every obligation reſulting from this ſuperiority of nature, and the higheſt and moſt excellent purpoſes of our being, is with the greateſt propriety and force urged upon us. In every page of the holy Scriptures the love of God ſmiles upon us with an attractive and endearing aſpect, to draw our affections to him, and to give a conſtancy and ſteddineſs to our virtue in the midſt of ſo many and ſo ſtrong temptations, when we know that only ſuch an adherence to truth and righteouſneſs will finally and for ever give us an intereſt in our heavenly Father's bleſſing.

In the Scriptures we have the Divine diſpleaſure againſt all the ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men ſet upon its true foundation, the odious and pernicious nature of ſin; which is in itſelf falſe, and miſchievous, the only proper and radical evil in the univerſe, and which alone can deprive us of happineſs, and ſubject us to miſery. In the word of God, his favor to men of piety and virtue is alſo ſet upon its proper foundation, the amiable and excellent nature of true holineſs; which in itſelf is true and ſalutary, the only proper and radical good, the glory of our nature, and which alone can render us fit to dwell for ever with God.——There we are kindly encouraged by the Divine grace to think of our ways, and by true repentance to turn from whatever is ſinful to the obedience of God.——There we are directed frequently to ſcrutinize our hearts to baniſh thence every corrupt principle, and to keep the ſpring of action within us pure from every diſorderly thought and inclination; to guard our ſpirits with a watchful eye from every impure motion and ſuggeſtion, to be vigilant againſt every attack of temptation, that we may keep ourſelves undefiled in the good ways of God.——There we are inſtructed in the moſt perfect and reaſonable ſobriety, temperance, and ſelf-denial, and warned of the danger of every ſenſual ſnare and allurement.——There this periſhing body, with whatever can delight and adorn it; there this preſent world, with whatever in it can ingage our affections and eſteem, are fully expoſed to the judgment and cenſures of reaſon, and manifeſtly ſhewn to be emptineſs and vanity, infinitely below the excellence and worth of immortal ſpirits, and therefore infinitely unfit to be purſued at the expence of our preſent integrity, or future felicity.

In the ſacred writings we find a rich magazine of all proper means for the ſanctification of our ſouls, and our moſt ſucceſsful advances in the life of God.——There we ſee that the Divine Power and Spirit is ready with its mighty aids, to aſſiſt, enlighten, and ſtrengthen our ſpirits, in proportion to our ſincere deſires and endeavours in godlineſs; and there we are directed every day, and at all times, to ſeek unto God, by fervent and believing prayer, for his guidance and protection, and are aſſured we ſhall never ſeek his face in vain.——There, in the holy

Scriptures,

Scriptures, we are taught the ordinances of religion, both public and private, in the conſcientious uſe of which we ſhall grow up into Chriſt Jeſus; particularly, we are commanded to ſet apart a competent portion of our time, every day, and to keep the ſabbath holy every week; that by ſerious meditation upon God's word, and by pouring out our hearts before him in prayer and thankſgiving, we may renew our ſpiritual ſtrength, be more and more confirmed in the habits of holineſs, and find ourſelves ſtill advancing nearer to heavenly perfection. This ſketch of the principles of holineſs, to be derived from the Scriptures, clearly proves their Divine original and excellence, as it ſets them vaſtly above any thing meer human wiſdom can diſcover or deviſe.

In the Scriptures we alſo find the beſt principles of comfort and refreſhment to the ſoul. How needful are ſuch principles in a ſcene of affliction, ſin, and weakneſs! In general, under how many amiable characters, under how many ſweet encouragements, are we invited to truſt in the Almighty and Eternal; to look unto him, and make his name, his goodneſs, and power, our refuge in every want, danger, difficulty, and conflict? Being aſſured that he cares for us, while we hope in him, and that he will never leave us nor forſake us. That however he may permit our ſufferings and griefs, he can never forget us, and will make all things, how bitter ſoever, work together for our good. Heaven is at all times open to our complaints and ſupplications, and the throne of God, which is a throne of grace, is eaſy of acceſs to the breathings and deſires of our hearts.

Are we loaded with a ſenſe of guilt? See the blood of Jeſus the ſecurity and ſeal of our pardon. Are we humbled under a ſenſe of our own unworthineſs? Hear the voice of Divine grace freely confering a dignity upon us far ſuperior to all the honors of this world. Look into the Scriptures; view the unſearchable riches of *Chriſt*; behold the love of our God and Redeemer; of his own gracious will, and meer good pleaſure, he has begoten us, he is become our Father, he has juſtified us, he has beſtowed upon us the honours of his children, he has made us welcome to all the bleſſings of his covenant, and to all the glories of his kingdom. Fearful and dejected Soul, look into the Goſpel and ſee thy God ſhining in all the beams of free, rich, and heavenly grace. Be of good comfort, thy ſins are forgiven, thy intereſt in the covenant is ſure; the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is thy God and Father, and thou art welcome to all the treaſures of his mercy and goodneſs. Only rejoice in this grace, and live agreeably to it in all faith, purity and holineſs, love and goodneſs.

Are you afraid your own weakneſs and ſurrounding temptations ſhould draw your regards from God, pervert your minds, and cauſe you to fall ſhort of ſalvation? Fear not, thou worm *Jacob*, for I am with thee, be not diſmayed, for I am thy God; *I will ſtrengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right-hand of my righteouſneſs*, or ſalvation. Only cleave unto God, by faith in Chriſt, with purpoſe of heart, and he who has begun a good work will certainly perfect it unto the day of Chriſt. You ſhall be more than conquerors through him that has loved us. Doth the world frown, and pour its ſorrows into your breaſts? Look to the heavenly world, the glory that ſhall be revealed

revealed in the ſaints. That is your home and country, that is your portion and inheritance; and if you regard it as ſuch, you will rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, and be raiſed far above the cares and fears of this low and tranſitory ſtate. Such ſtrong conſolations the holy Scriptures ſupply, and therefore their author is undoubtedly the God of all conſolation; for no wiſdom of man could ever poſſibly have opened to us ſuch a fountain of joy and refreſhment. And thus we ſee the Scriptures contain, beyond all diſpute, the beſt principles of knowledge, of holineſs, and comfort.

It is no leſs evident that they deliver the beſt precepts for directing all our actions. Such precepts are reducible to three heads, our duty to God, to our neighbour, and to ourſelves. God we are taught to worſhip with a ſincere admiration of his glory and perfections, with profound reverence of his greatneſs, with humble adoration of his Sovereignty, with the higheſt love and eſteem for his excellency and amiableneſs, with joy and gratitude for his goodneſs, and with a heart truly devoted to his honor, and determined for his obedience. To our neighbour we are directed to perform not only juſtice, truth, and equity, but alſo unfeigned charity, the moſt extenſive kindneſs and benevolence. To ourſelves we owe ſelf-preſervation and ſelf-government, and the Scriptures admoniſh us to take the wiſeſt care of our being, by cultivating and guarding our minds, and by mortifying all inordinate affections and paſſions. In ſhort, all that our reaſon can find in the law or religion of nature, is, without the leaſt omiſſion, tranſcribed into revelation; and moreover, the wiſdom of God has not only perfected and ſupplied our deficiencies, but has diſcovered to us the riches of goodneſs, knowledge, and power, infinitely beyond what our natural faculties could ever have attained.

Thus we are furniſhed both with the moſt perfect rules of virtue and godlineſs, and alſo with the moſt powerful motives to the obſervance of them. And thus the Scriptures are a ſtorehouſe of the moſt ſacred and uſeful knowledge, adapted to the improvement of our minds in whatever is good and excellent, beyond all competition and objection. But as thoſe only can object againſt them, who never read them, or never with ſerious minds, if you would know what the Scriptures are, if you would know whether they are of God, read them, ſtudy them, meditate upon them, and you cannot fail of being convinced of their excellency and Divine original.

Such being the intrinſic excellency of the Scriptures, it is no wonder it entered into our Lord's thoughts, and was the object of his care in his laſt moments, even amidſt the pains and agonies of death. Its being the ſubject of his thoughts at a time, when his thoughts turned upon nothing but what was infinitely momentous; his being concerned upon the croſs, that no point of Scripture ſhould want its full evidence, or eſtabliſhment, is a demonſtration of the high worth and excellency of Scripture. Under all his preceding ſufferings, which muſt be exceeding bitter, he never dropped the leaſt expreſſion of the ſorrow and anguiſh he felt, but endured it with the ſilence of the moſt perfect meekneſs and patience. We muſt therefore conclude, he would not have opened his mouth to ſignify his grievous diſtreſs, when on the croſs, *why haſt thou*

forſaken

forſaken me? had it not been for the ſake of expreſſing his truſt in God; nor would he have mentioned his thirſt, but out of regard to Divine revelation, and its accompliſhment.

Our Lord has, all along, from firſt to laſt, ſhown the higheſt reſpect to the word of God. With this ſword he did combat and conquer Satan, when tempted by him in the wilderneſs. He always in the courſe of his miniſtry appeals to it as the ſtandard of religious truth, revealing the will of God, and explaining his diſpenſations. He declares he came not to deſtroy ſo much as one title of the Law or the Prophets, but to compleat, vindicate, and illuſtrate them; aſſuring us that as their original is Divine, their honors ſhall be perpetual; and that, *till heaven and earth paſs away*, and the whole frame of nature be diſſolved, *not one jot ſhall paſs*, or periſh, *from the Law*, or from Revelation, *till all be fulfilled*. John v. 39. He directs the *Jews* to ſearch the Scriptures, as they rightly apprehended the doctrine of eternal life was contained in them, and as they teſtified of him.

As his ſufferings drew nearer, he frequently takes notice of the fulfilment of the Scriptures in the ſeveral ſteps and events which led to them. *Matt.* xxvi. 31, 54. *John* xiii. 18. xv. 25. That the Scriptures might be fulfilled in his ſufferings and death, he would not allow his Diſciples to reſcue him out of the hands of thoſe who came to ſeize him. *Matt.* xxvi. 53, 54. Had he prayed to the Father he would have given him more than twelve legions of angels; *but how then*, ſays he, *ſhall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it muſt be?* And when upon the croſs, he is not diverted from the ſame important ſubject, though in the midſt of the moſt exquiſite torments, and labouring under a violent drought. Regard to the Scriptures prevails in his mind, more than the ſenſe of the greateſt pain and anguiſh; and not to relieve his thirſt, *but that the Scriptures might be fulfilled*, he cried out, *I thirſt*.

Thus our crucified Lord has ſet the ſeal of his blood to the Divine authority, excellency, and certainty of the holy Scriptures. He came into the world, he laid down his life to accompliſh what was fore-ordained, and foretold in the Scriptures. Now this evidently implies, that our Lord knew, and was perſuaded, the Scriptures are of Divine original, are the word, and declare to us the mind and will of God; conſequently, that they contain diſcoveries and inſtructions of the higheſt and moſt excellent nature; and that all things they predict muſt, and moſt certainly will, be accompliſhed.

It ſeems but an inconſiderable circumſtance, that the Scriptures intimate, they would give the *Meſſiah* in his thirſt vinegar to drink. This ſeems to be a fact of no great moment, nor do we know that it ſtood in connection with any thing of conſequence, and yet our Lord would not overlook it. He took care it ſhould be punctually fulfilled. How much more then may we perſuade ourſelves, that all the great promiſes, and all the predictions, relating to matters of vaſt importance, ſhall be accompliſhed? The apparent inſignificancy of vinegar being offered to *Chriſt* on the croſs, adds great force to this argument. If a point, ſeemingly ſo minute, was carefully attended to, and punctually diſcharged, when the Redeemer was in extremity of pain and torture, how much more, now that he is entered into his joy; now that he is poſſeſſed of the

the higheſt felicity and glory; now that he is inveſted with the moſt extenſive power and dominion; how much more will he make good all that God has declared by the ancient Prophets in the Old Teſtament, and all that he himſelf has foretold and promiſed in the New, relating to things of infinite moment? Exceeding great and precious promiſes are given us of the Divine preſence, bleſſing, and protection through this world, which every upright mind may be aſſured will be fully made good.

How many magnificent predictions has our Lord, and his Apoſtles, delivered concerning the world that is to come——*That he will raiſe us up again at the laſt day.* And we ſhall certainly be raiſed out of our graves, and reſtored to a life quite different from the preſent——*That he will come in great power and glory to judge the world.* And moſt aſſuredly he will ſo come, and we ſhall every one of us ſtand before his tribunal to give an account of ourſelves——To his faithful ſervants *he has promiſed eternal life*: and to all ſuch, without fail, he will give eternal life.——It is frequently foretold, that *everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord* will be the dreadful lot of the impenitently wicked, and doubtleſs everlaſting deſtruction will be the dreadful lot of ſuch.—Moſt clearly he has made known his everlaſting kingdom of glory, where his ſincere followers ſhall partake of his glory and felicity; and we may firmly believe and hope, this will be our happy condition if we make it our preſent care to be his ſincere followers. Thus has our benevolent Saviour afforded us, in his laſt moments, a moſt ſolid ground of hope towards God, and directed us abſolutely to depend upon all that the Scriptures reveal concerning our ſalvation.

CHAP. XLIII.

Chriſtians ought to be thankful for the SCRIPTURES, *and maintain a high Eſteem for them.*

HAVING, ſo far as ſeems neceſſary, conſidered the uſe and importance of the holy Scriptures, I would now point out the propereſt improvement of this intereſting ſubject.

We may evidently ſee our obligation to be thankful for the Scriptures; they are the gift of God, and a great help to our underſtanding, and rational powers in the beſt attainments. And as our natural light and faculties certainly demand our gratitude and thanks, that God has *made us wiſer than the fowls of heaven, and taught us more than the beaſts of the earth*; and as our joy and praiſe will be agreable to our illumination, when in God's heavenly light we ſhall ſee glorious and eternal light; for the

the ſuperior inſtructions and diſcoveries of revelation do challenge our ſincere thanks to our wiſe and benevolent Father, who has imployed his ſpirit at ſundry times, and divers manners, to pour knowledge and light into the darkneſs of the nations, which otherwiſe would, in effect, have generally loſt the uſe of intelligence; and that at length he has viſited us with the day-ſpring from on high, a full diſplay of his heavenly grace in the everlaſting Goſpel.

Should we not maintain a juſt, that is to ſay, a very high eſteem of the word of God? If it is true, *that all Scripture is given by inſpiration of God, and is profitable* for the nobleſt ends, *for doctrine, for reproof, correction, inſtruction in righteouſneſs*, then it is true that we cannot ſet too high a value upon it. The things of this world, which are very imperfect and tranſitory, have, alas, too large a ſhare of our hearts; but the holy Scriptures are a treaſury of heavenly and everlaſting riches, and it is but reaſonable we ſhould give them the preference to what we know is infinitely inferior in worth. And it is upon this ground that the wiſeſt and beſt of men have repreſented them as the higheſt object of our delight and eſteem. *Pſalm* xix. 7—10. *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the ſoul; the teſtimony of the Lord is ſure, making wiſe the ſimple. The ſtatutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. More to be deſired are they than gold; yea, than much fine gold; ſweeter alſo than honey, and the honey-comb.* Pſalm cxix. 96, 97, 103. *I have ſeen an end of all perfection; but thy commandment is exceeding broad. O, how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day. How ſweet are thy words unto my taſte; yea, ſweeter than honey to my mouth!* And we may then only call ourſelves happy when we have attained the ſame ſentiments and taſte of the good word of God. Indeed I cannot ſee that we uſe it as what it is, or anſwer our Chriſtian profeſſion, if we do not treat it with great eſteem and regard. To this purpoſe let us——

Not allow ourſelves to think of it with indifference, or in any reſpect to treat it irreverently. The worth, and infinite importance of the thing will not bear a cool and languid thought; and it is too ſacred and divine to admit of any degree of contempt. It is with ſome reckoned a turn of wit to introduce Scripture phraſe into common converſation, and to provoke pleaſantry by quoting the Bible. What is this but burleſquing the word of God, and raiſing a laugh at the expence of the greateſt bleſſing of heaven? Such a prophane levity will by degrees leſſen the reverence we owe to Scripture, and deſtroy all ſerious regard to it; which is, in effect, to deſtroy ourſelves; and therefore ſhould not only be carefully avoided, but with abhorrence deteſted.

Guard your minds well againſt Deiſm on the one hand, and Popery on the other. Both theſe agree in depreciating the Scriptures. The Deiſt will perſuade you revelation is unneceſſary, and conſequently that the Scripture is no revelation from God, but a fallacy and cheat, at firſt invented, and afterwards ſupported, by thoſe who find their account in it. He racks his invention to ſtart any difficulty or objection to prove that the Bible is not ſufficient to the purpoſes of revelation. And here, the Romaniſt joins him. They go indeed different ways, the one, as he pretends, to the meer religion of nature, and the other, in reality, to the authority of the church, and a living infallible guide upon earth. But

both ſtart from the ſame point, degrading the holy Scriptures; and I fear very much, they will meet and unite again in a few generations. For where Deiſtical principles prevail in a family, the riſing generation muſt grow up in great ignorance of revelation, and the true worſhip of God, and ſo will be expoſed to the artifice of the ſeducer, who lies in wait to deceive. For however men may refine in their ſpeculations, and put a force upon the moſt common and obvious principles in their minds, yet certainly ſuch is the general ſenſe of mankind, when left free and unbiaſſed, with regard to religion, that they eaſily admit the belief of ſome ſuperior inviſible powers, and their intercourſe with this world. And being ignorant of the truth, are with little difficulty drawn into error.

This makes me apprehend that the preſent ſpread of Deiſm will, in a few ages, produce a large increaſe of Popery among us. Not to ſay, that Popiſh ſeminaries, where they cannot directly promote the cauſe of the church of ROME, are allowed and inſtructed to do it in this indirect way. For confuſion and ignorance of any kind, is a proper ground for them to work upon. But this by the bye. My deſign is to guard you againſt thoſe who would raiſe ſcruples and prejudices in your minds againſt revelation. And without deſcending to particulars, you may be very ſure of this one thing, that whoever cavil againſt the Scriptures are ſtrangers to them. They object and take upon themſelves to judge in a matter in which they are no ways qualified to be judges; in a matter which they neither underſtand, nor, in their preſent way of thinking, ever intend to underſtand. For, whatever airs ſuch may give themſelves, or what ſemblance or ſhew ſoever they make of knowledge and wiſdom, theſe men have never ſtudied the Scriptures; nor, generally ſpeaking, have they learning or capacity to enter into their deep and abſtruſe parts. Had they ever ſoberly and ſeriouſly ſtudied the Scriptures, they muſt of neceſſity have found ſo many, and ſuch evident marks of a Divine Spirit, ſuch glorious diſplays of the wiſdom, power, and truth of God, as would have taught them to think more modeſtly of what is doubtful and obſcure.

When did you ever hear of any name, illuſtrious for learning and wiſdom, that ever diſputed the Divine original and authority of Scripture? Did ever a BOYLE, a NEWTON, or a LOCKE, queſtion the Divine original and truth of Scripture? * No. Theſe men, of the moſt eminent attainments

* The famous SELDEN, one of the moſt eminent philoſophers, and moſt learned men of his time; who had taken a diligent ſurvey of antiquity, and what knowledge was conſiderable amongſt *Jews*, *Heathens*, and *Chriſtians*, and read as much, perhaps, as any man ever read; towards the end of his days, declared to Arch-Biſhop USHER.

" That notwithſtanding he had been ſo laborious in his enquiries; and " curious in his collections; and had poſſeſt himſelf of a treaſure of books " and manuſcripts, upon all ancient ſubjects; yet he could *reſt his ſoul on none* " *ſave the Scriptures*. And above all, that paſſage gave him the moſt ſatisfac- " tion. *Titus* ii. 11—14. as comprizing the nature, end, and reward of true " religion.

" *THE grace of God, that bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared to all men.*

" *TEACHING*

attainments in wiſdom and knowledge, held the Scriptures in the higheſt veneration and eſteem, as a revelation from God; and by their excellent comments have acknowledged the Divine authority even of the moſt abſtruſe and difficult parts. No. The cavillers againſt Scripture are men of an inferior claſs, who want, and are no ways ſolicitous to gain, the qualifications needful to render them in any degree fit or competent judges. It is enough for ſuch to pick up a ſmall collection of ſcruples, to eaſe themſelves of the trouble of thought and ſtudy, and at the ſame time to give a plauſible appearance of both. But with men of judgment, ſuch muſt ſtand in a very ridiculous light. To a judicious phyſician, how ſilly and contemptible muſt a perſon be, who, though no ways ſkilled in the ſcience, ſhould take upon him perpetually to cenſure, viliſy, and condemn a BOERHAAVE, or a SYDENHAM, the greateſt maſters in the art of medicine.

Perhaps you may ſay—Are there not real difficulties in the Scriptures? And will not difficulties naturally and unavoidably produce objections? I anſwer—There are difficulties in the Scriptures, and difficulties are the

" *TEACHING us, that denying ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts, we ſhould live* " *ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in this preſent world.*

" *LOOKING for that bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God,* " *and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.*

" *WHO gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and pu-* " *rify unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*"

SIR CHRISTOPHER HATTON, a great ſtateſman, a little before his death, adviſed his relations to be ſerious in ſearching after the will of God in his holy word; for, ſaid he —

" It is deſervedly accounted a piece of excellent knowledge to underſtand " the laws of the land, and the cuſtoms of a man's country; how much more " to know the ſtatutes of heaven, and the laws of eternity, thoſe immutable " and eternal laws of juſtice and righteouſneſs! To know the will and plea- " ſure of the great Monarch, and univerſal King! *I have ſeen an end of all* " *perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad.* Whatever other know- " ledge a man may be endowed withal, could he by a vaſt and imperious " mind, and a heart as large as the ſand upon the ſea-ſhore, command all " the knowledge of art and nature, of words and things; and yet not know " the Author of his being, and the Preſerver of his life, his Sovereign and " and his Judge, his ſureſt Refuge in trouble, his beſt Friend or worſt Ene- " my, the Support of his life and the Hope of his death, his future Happi- " neſs and his Portion for ever; he doth but go down to hell with a great deal " of wiſdom."

MR. LOCKE, alſo juſtly eſteemed one of the greateſt maſters of reaſon, and a philoſopher of the greateſt freedom of thought, at the cloſe of his life, thus adviſed an intimate friend.

" Study the holy Scriptures, eſpecially the New Teſtament; therein are " contained the words of eternal life. It hath God for its Author, ſalvation " for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter." Poſthumous Works, p. 344.

And to the ſame effect, a wiſer ſtill in the ſame ſituation, SOLOMON. *To fear God, and keep his commandments,* (in order to which it is neceſſary, that we read and ſtudy them,) *is the whole of man. For God ſhall bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* Eccleſ. xii. 13, 14.

he natural ground of objections, but not of deſtroying any truth, otherwiſe well eſtabliſhed. For all ſcience whatever is attended with difficulties, and objections may be raiſed againſt the cleareſt and moſt demonſtrable truths. The being of God, and his perfections, the creation of the world, the conſtitution of nature, the ways of Providence, and any the beſt and moſt uſeful knowledge we can gain, is attended with difficulties, and conſequently liable to objections. Let it be well obſerved, thoſe difficulties ariſe not from the things themſelves, but from the imperfection of our minds. In the things themſelves there are no difficulties, nor any ground for objection; the difficulties are in the narrowneſs of our underſtandings, which find a great difficulty in comprehending many things relating even to the moſt certain and undoubted truths. And, with regard to the Scriptures, I myſelf have had large experience of this. Many things which at firſt, and for ſome time, appeared to me very obſcure, unaccountable, and inconſiſtent, by patient application, and a cloſer attention, have ſhone out unclouded into the plaineſt and cleareſt truths. By this I am convinced, that all remaining difficulties are not ſo in themſelves, but only ſo with reſpect to the imperfection of my mind. And upon the whole, you may be very ſure, when you hear any objection advanced againſt the Scriptures, that the objection, in truth and reality, lies againſt the objector himſelf, as he either cannot, or will not, ſee the truth as it ſtands in the word of God.

But you may ſay—Why ſhould God put into his word things to us difficult and obſcure? I anſwer—To exerciſe our diligence, and to try our integrity. I have ſaid ſo much to convince you of the vanity and folly of Deiſm, and to guard you againſt any bad impreſſions from that quarter, which may prove of very fatal conſequence. A little of this leaven may do a great deal of harm, as it creates an indifference to Divine knowledge, to the inſtructions and counſels of our heavenly Father; as it takes us off from the ſtudy of the Scriptures, robs us of the beſt guide of our actions, the moſt powerful motives to all virtue, the ſtrongeſt conſolations in every day of affliction; and at laſt expoſes to the righteous judgment of God, for the neglect and contempt of the beſt of bleſſings he ever beſtowed upon the world.

We have the ſtrongeſt reaſon to be fully ſatisfied of the ſufficiency of Scripture, as perfectly able to make us wiſe unto ſalvation. The Papiſt will own the Scriptures to be the word of God, and a true rule of faith, but not a ſufficient rule. The only ſufficient rule of faith, he will tell you, is the church of Rome, which infallibly underſtands, and propounds what the Chriſtian world is to believe and do in order to eternal ſalvation; and therefore you ought implicitly to ſubmit your underſtanding and conſcience to her direction and deciſions; and doing ſo, you have no need to conſult the Scriptures, being already provided with a living infallible guide. But if the Scriptures are a true rule of faith, then are they a ſufficient rule to all ſorts and degrees of perſons, for they expreſly affirm their own ſufficiency in this extenſive ſenſe.

That nothing but Scripture is a ſufficient ground to build our faith and practice upon, as Chriſtians, will clearly appear to any conſiderate perſon. All beſides is uncertainty and confuſion. You have Popes againſt Popes, councils againſt councils, fathers againſt fathers, the church of

one age againſt the church of another age, and tradition paſſing through hands ſo uncertain and inconſiſtent, muſt of neceſſity loſe all force of evidence. Only upon the rock of Scripture can we find any reſt for the ſole of our feet; and there we have a firm foundation, and a ſure infallible guide, which we may with the greateſt certainty and ſtedfaſtneſs oppoſe to the authority of the church of ROME.

Whatever may be pretended to gain that church the credit of a guide, all that, and much more may be ſaid for the Scriptures. Has the church of ROME been ancient? The Scriptures are more ancient. Is that church a means to keep Chriſtians in unity? So is the Scriptures to preſerve unity of belief in things neceſſary and plainly revealed, and in unity of charity in other matters. Following the Scriptures, we ſhall follow that which muſt be true, if the church of ROME be true, for ſhe owns the truth of Scripture. Whereas if we follow that church, we follow that which, if the Scriptures be true, may be falſe; nay, which if the Scriptures be true, muſt be falſe, becauſe the Scriptures teſtify againſt it. We have God's expreſs command to follow the Scriptures, and no intimation or colour of any prohibition; but to believe in the church of ROME we have no command at all, much leſs an expreſs command. Nay, on the contrary, we have a general prohibition in theſe words, *Call no man maſter upon earth.*

Following the Scriptures we ſhall embrace a religion, which being contrary to fleſh and blood, without any aſſiſtance from worldly power, wiſdom, or policy, nay, againſt all the power and policy of the world, prevailed and ſpread itſelf in a ſhort time, over a very great part of the world. Whereas it is apparent the church of ROME has got, and ſtill maintains her authority over mens conſciences by counterfeiting falſe miracles, forging falſe hiſtories, corrupting the monuments of former times, by wars, by perſecutions, by maſſacres, by treaſons, by rebellions; in ſhort, by all manner of carnal unjuſtifiable means, whether violent or fraudulent.

Following the Scriptures, we ſhall believe a religion the firſt preachers and profeſſors whereof could certainly have no worldly ends; could neither project, nor promiſe to themſelves by it any of the profits, honours, or pleaſures of this world, but rather the contrary, even all the hardſhips the world could lay upon them. On the other hand, the head of the church of ROME, the pretended vicar of Chriſt, ſucceſſor of the Apoſtles, and guide of faith, it is palpably evident, makes the Popiſh religion the inſtrument of his ambition, to gratify the luſt of dominion, by ſubjecting the conſciences of all mankind to his authority, and all nations to his juriſdiction. Beſides, it is evident to any man, who has but half an eye, that moſt of thoſe doctrines, which the Romiſh church addeth to the Scriptures, are, one way or other, calculated to promote the honour or temporal profit of the teachers of them.

Following the Scriptures only, we ſhall embrace a religion of perfect ſimplicity and purity; conſiſting, in a manner, wholly in the worſhip of God in ſpirit and truth, and in ſincere obedience to his will. Whereas the Roman church, and doctrine, is loaded with an infinity of weak, childiſh, ridiculous ſuperſtitions and ceremonies, and the moſt groſs and manifeſt idolatry. If we follow the Scriptures, we muſt not promiſe ourſelves

ſelves ſalvation without forſaking effectually, and mortifying all vices, and practiſing ſincerely all Chriſtian virtues, which our reaſon tells us is the only way in which we can ſecure the favour of God, and our own happineſs. But the church of ROME opens an eaſier and broader way to heaven, and though a man continues all his life long in a courſe of ſin, gives him aſſurance he may be let into heaven by a back gate, even by an act of attrition, at the hour of death, if it be joined with confeſſion to a prieſt, or by an act of contrition without it.

Juſt and perfect are the precepts of piety and humility, of innocence and patience, of goodneſs, temperance, ſobriety, juſtice, meekneſs, fortitude, and conſtancy, contempt of the world, the love of God, and of mankind; in a word, of all virtues, and againſt all vices, which the Scriptures oblige us to obſerve and obey, as ever we hope to ſee God in his heavenly kingdom; which if they were generally obeyed, could not but make the world generally happy; and the goodneſs of them alone is ſufficient to make any wiſe and good man believe, that the religion, which obliges to them, comes from God the fountain of all goodneſs. The church of ROME enervates, and in a manner diſſolves and abrogates many of the holy precepts of the Goſpel, by teaching men, that they are not laws for all Chriſtians, but counſels of perfection, and matters of ſupererogation, which a man ſhould do well, if he obſerves, but ſhall not ſin, if he doth not obſerve them; that they are for thoſe who aim at high places in heaven, but if a man will be content with an inferior ſituation there, eſpecially if he will be content to taſte of purgatory in the way, he need not incumber his thoughts at preſent with many of the rules of the Goſpel. Not to ſay, that the *Romiſh* church manifeſtly foments a ſpirit of uncharitableneſs and cruelty to all mankind, not of her profeſſion. Therefore the religion of this church is far from being ſo holy or ſo good as the doctrine of Chriſt delivered in the Scriptures, and conſequently cannot come from the ſame fountain of holineſs and goodneſs.

Following the church of ROME for our guide, we ſhall only follow a combination of deluded men, who have faſt cloſed their eyes, and are not at liberty to open them, or to examine and conſider whether they are in the right or no. For that Papiſts have no liberty of judgment is manifeſt, becauſe they reckon it a mortal ſin to *doubt of any part of their doctrine*. Whence it follows, that ſeeing every man muſt reſolve that he will never commit mortal ſin, that he muſt never examine the grounds of Popery at all, for fear he ſhould be moved to doubt; or if he do examine, he muſt before reſolve that no evidence, not even of Scripture, no motives, be they ever ſo ſtrong, ſhall move him to doubt, leſt he ſhould fall into mortal ſin.

Seeing this is the condition of all who are eſteemed good Catholicks, who can deny that they are a ſett of men unwilling and afraid to underſtand; that have eyes to ſee and will not, that have not the love of the truth, but are given over to ſtrong deluſion? And therefore in following ſuch a church, and ſuch guides, we ſhall only follow the blind, and with them fall into the ditch. If we follow the Scriptures, we ſhall follow only the truth; we ſhall follow a guide which exhorts us to keep our eyes always open to the truth, to try all things, and to hold faſt only

that which is good; to try every ſpirit, and to bring every doctrine to the teſt of God's pure and holy word. And thus we are at liberty to review the ground upon which we ſtand, to correct any error, and to improve our minds in the knowledge and love of the truth.

In theſe, and ſeveral other reſpects, the ſufficiency of Scripture, to guide us in the way of life and ſalvation, is evidently ſeen, and how fooliſh and unſafe it is to forſake this heavenly guide, and follow the deluſions of the church of ROME. But then, the greater the evidence that Scripture is a perfect guide to eternal life, the greater muſt our obligations be to uſe it faithfully as ſuch.

Let us be much in reading the Scriptures; and think and judge freely. By judging freely, I do not mean raſhly, and at random. We muſt judge of the Scriptures with all poſſible care and caution. But judge freely, without regard to the authority of any perſon, party, or church whatſoever. We are made by our gracious Creator for the knowledge of the truth; not to be the dupes of cuſtom or authority, not blindly to follow the dictates, decrees, and conſtitutions of weak and ambitious men; but imploy our minds generouſly in the ſearch and knowledge of the truth. Chriſtianity calls us to the nobleſt exerciſe of our underſtanding, and we loſe the benefit of it, if we do not think ſeriouſly, and judge freely.

There is no other way of having our minds eſtabliſhed, and well ſeaſoned with the principles of our religion. In this way we ſhall ſee the glory and excellency of the holy Scriptures; thus we ſhall feel the power of God's word upon our hearts; thus our underſtandings will gradually be inlightened with Divine knowledge, and, to our unſpeakable comfort, grow up into Jeſus Chriſt, and gain the happineſs of the man, who forſaking all impiety, and every falſe way, delights himſelf in the law of the Lord, and daily meditates therein. Such a one is under the ſpecial bleſſing of heaven, and, like a tree planted in a fruitful ſoil, ſhall grow and flouriſh, and riſe infinitely higher than all the honours, wealth, and enjoyments of this world; he ſhall riſe to immortality, and there find all the glorious fruits of a life of piety, and the full accompliſhment of the magnificent promiſes which here on earth he with pleaſure peruſed in the word of God.

This is what I have to offer on this important ſubject. Whatever the reſult may be, with regard to others, this one point is ſufficiently ſecured —I have ſatisfied my conſcience by diſcharging what I eſteem an incumbent duty; and I have done it in the faithfulneſs and integrity of my heart, according to the wiſdom God has given me.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

Chronological Dates for Chapters xxxiv. xxxv. and xxxvi.

CHAP. XXXIV.

PROPHETS *before the* CAPTIVITY.

Years before Chriſt.		
812	AMAZIAH king of Judah Jeroboam II. king of Iſrael	Jonah ſent with a meſſage. 2 Kings xiii. 20. xiv. 25.
800	Uzziah king of Judah Jeroboam II.	Joel i. ii. iii.
800	Jeroboam II. king of Iſrael Uzziah king of Judah	Amos i——ix.
800	Jeroboam II. Uzziah	Hoſea i. ii. iii.
772	Menahem I.	Hoſea iv.
770	Menahem II.	Jonah i. ii. iii. iv.
759	Uzziah 52. Pekah 1.	Iſaiah vi. ii. iii. iv. v.
753	Jotham 5. Pekah 7.	Micah i. ii.
742	Ahaz 1. Pekah 18.	Iſaiah vii.
	In the ſame year	Iſaiah viii. ix. x.
	In the ſame year	Iſaiah xvii.
740	Ahaz 3. Pekah 20.	Iſaiah i.
	In the ſame year	Iſaiah xxviii.
739	Aphaz 4.	Hoſea v. vi.
726	Hezekiah 2.	Iſaiah xiv. ver. 28, *&c.*
	In the ſame year	Iſaiah xv. xvi.
725	Hezekiah 3. Hoſhea 6.	Hoſea vii—xiv. Micah iii. iv. v. vi. vii.
720	Hezekiah 7.	Nahum i. ii. iii.
715	Hezekiah 13.	Iſaiah xxiii—xxvii.
714	Hezekiah 14.	Iſaiah xxxviii. xxxix.
714	Hezekiah 14.	Iſaiah xxix. xxx—xxxv.
	In the ſame year	Iſaiah xxii. ver. 1——15.
	In the ſame year	Iſaiah xxi.
713	Hezekiah 15.	Iſaiah xx.
	In the ſame year	Iſaiah xviii. xix.
710	Hezekiah 18.	Iſaiah x. ver. 5, *&c.* xi. xii. xiii. xiv. ver. 28, *&c.*

Years before Chriſt.		
	In the ſame year	Iſaiah xxxvi. xxxvii.
	In the ſame year	Iſaiah xl—xliii, *&c.*
698	Manaſſeh 1.	Iſaiah xxii. ver. 15.
628	Joſiah 13.	Jeremiah i. ii.
623	Joſiah 18.	Jeremiah xi. ver. 1—18.
		Jeremiah iii—x. xii—xxi.
		Jeremiah xi. ver. 18, *&c.*
611	Joſiah 31.	Habakkuk i. ii. iii. Zephaniah i. ii. iii.
610	Jehoiakim 1.	Jeremiah xxii. ver. 1——24.
	In the ſame year	Jeremiah xxvi.
606	Jehoiakim 4.	Jeremiah xxv.
	In the ſame year	Jeremiah xxxv.
	In the ſame year	Jeremiah xlvi.
	In the ſame year	Jeremiah xxxvi. ver. 1—9.
	In the ſame year	Jeremiah xlv.
	In the ſame year	Daniel i.
605	Jehoiakim 5.	Jeremiah xxxvi. ver. 9, *&c.*
603	Jehoiakim 7.	Daniel ii.
599	Zedekiah 1.	Jeremiah xxii. ver. 24, *&c.*
	In the ſame year	Jeremiah xxiii.
	In the ſame year	Jeremiah xiii. ver. 13, *&c.*
	In the ſame year	Jeremiah xxiv.
	In the ſame year	Jeremiah xlix. ver. 34, *&c.*
598	Zedekiah 2.	Jeremiah xxix.
	In the ſame year	Jeremiah xxx. xxxi.
	In the ſame year	Jeremiah xxvii.
596	Zedekiah 4.	Jeremiah xxviii.
	In the ſame year	Jeremiah l. li.
595	Zedekiah 5. Jehoiachin's capt. 5.	Ezekiel i.—vii.
594	Zedekiah 6. Jehoiachin's capt. 6.	Ezekiel viii.——xi.
593	Zedekiah 7. Jehoiachin's capt. 7.	Ezekiel xii——xix.
	In the ſame year, fifth month	Ezekiel xx——xxiii.
591	Zedekiah 9. Jehoiachin's capt. 9.	Jeremiah xxi. xxxiv. ver. 1——8.
	In the ſame year	Jeremiah xlvii.
	In the ſame year	Jeremiah xlviii. xlix. ver. 1—34.
	In the ſame year	Ezekiel xxiv. xxv.
590	Zedekiah 10, Jehoiachin's capt. 10.	Jeremiah xxxvii. ver. 1——11.
	In the ſame year	Jeremiah xxxiv. ver. 8, *&c.*
	In the ſame year	Jeremiah xxxvii. ver. 11——16.
	In the ſame year	Jeremiah xxxii. xxxiii.
	In the ſame year	Ezekiel xxix. ver. 1—17. xxx.
	In the ſame year	Jeremiah xxxvii. ver. 17, *&c.*
	In the ſame year	Jeremiah xxxviii. ver. 1——14.
	In the ſame year	Jeremiah xxxix. ver. 15, *&c.*
	In the ſame year	Jeremiah xxxviii. ver. 14, *&c.*

589 Zedekiah

Years before Chriſt.		
589	Zedekiah 11. Jehoiachin's capt. 11. firſt month.	Ezekiel xxxvi. xxxvii. xxxviii.
	In the ſame year, third month	Ezekiel xxxi.
	In the ſame year, fourth month	Jeremiah xxxix. ver. 1——11. lii. ver. 1——30.
	In the ſame year, fifth or ſixth month	Jeremiah xxxix. ver. 11——15. xl. ver. 1——7.
	In the ſame year	Jeremiah xl. ver. 7. xli. xlii. xliii. xliv. ver. 1——8.

CHAP. XXXV.

PROPHETS *after the Deſtruction of the* TEMPLE, *during the* CAPTIVITY.

Years before Chriſt.		
588	JEHOIACHIN's capt. 12. tenth month	Ezekiel xxxiii.
	In the ſame year, twelfth month	Ezekiel xxxii.
	Between the 12 and 25 captivity	Ezekiel xxxiv. xxxvi. xxxvii. xxxviii. xxxix.
	In the ſame year	Obadiah
	In the ſame year	Ezekiel xxxv.
	In this year Nebuchadnezzar ſet up his golden image	Daniel iii.
754	Jehoiachin's captivity 25.	Ezekiel xl. xli. *&c.*
569	Jehoiachin's captivity 30.	Ezekiel xxix. ver. 17, *&c.*
	In the ſame year	Daniel iv.
562	Jehoiachin's captivity 37.	Jeremiah lii. ver. 31, *&c.*
555	Belſhazzar 1.	Daniel vii.
553	Belſhazzar 3.	Daniel viii.
539	Belſhazzar 17.	Daniel v.
538	Darius the Mede 1.	Daniel vi.
	In the ſame year	Daniel ix.
536	Cyrus 1.	Ezra i. ii.
535	Cyrus 2.	Ezra iii.

CHAP. XXXVI.

PROPHETS *after the* CAPTIVITY, *under the ſecond* TEMPLE.

Years before Chriſt.		
535	CYRUS 2. C In the third year of Cyrus, and third after the captivity	Ezra iv.
		Daniel x. xi. xii.
520	Darius Hyſtaſpes 2. ſixth month	Haggai i. ver. 1——12.
	In the ſame year and month	Haggai i. ver. 12, *&c.* Ezra v.
	In the ſame year, ſeventh month	Haggai ii. ver. 1——10.
	In the ſame year, eighth month	Zechariah i. ver. 1——7.
	In the ſame year, ninth month	Haggai ii. ver. 10, *&c.*
	In the ſame year, eleventh month	Zechariah i. ver. 7, *&c.* ii——vi.
516	Darius 3.	Ezra v. ver. 3, *&c.*
518	Darius 4.	Ezra vi. ver. 1——15.
	In the ſame year, ninth month	Zechariah vii. viii.
	Subſequent to the fourth year of Darius Hyſtaſpes	Zechariah ix—xiv.
515	Darius 6.	Ezra vi. ver. 15, *&c.*
462	Ahaſuerus 3.	Eſther i.
461	Ahaſuerus 4.	Eſther ii. ver. 1—16.
458	Ahaſuerus 7.	Ezra vii—x.
	In the ſame year	Eſther ii. ver. 16—21.
457	Ahaſuerus 8.	Eſther ii. ver. 21, *&c.*
453	Ahaſuerus 12.	Eſther iii. iv. v, *&c.*
445	Ahaſuerus 20.	Nehemiah i—iii, *&c.*
433	Ahaſuerus 32.	Nehemiah xiii. ver. 6.
429	Ahaſuerus 36.	Malachi i—iv.
428	Ahaſuerus 37.	Nehemiah xiii. ver. 6, *&c.*
296	Ptolemy Soter 9.	The Canon of the Old Teſtament compleated, by adding two books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Eſther, and Malachi. By SIMON the Juſt.

THE

THE

PREFACE.

ONE may divide men into two general claſſes, ſome are without any knowledge of a Deity, or ſence of Religion: travellers tell us, that in the *Weſt-Indies*, the eaſtern parts of *Tartary*, and ſome places of *Africa*, ſuch people are to be found. I know this is a fact which is diſputed by others, and *Fabricius* a divine of the Palatinate, pretends that he has ſolidly confuted it. If this fact ſhould be thought doubtful, yet it is known at leaſt, that ſome perſons may be found here and there in the world who look upon the exiſtence of a Deity, as upon a fable, and who ridicule all acts of religious worſhip whatſoever: but one may alſo ſay, that if he compare theſe with the reſt of the world, they make the leaſt and worſt part of mankind, though many of them affect to live morally well.

All the reſt of the world make profeſſion that they own a God; that is to ſay, a moſt perfect, eternal, and independent Being; that he governs all things by his Providence; that there is a difference between good and evil; that man doth well or ill in thoſe actions which depend on his liberty: From whence they equally conclude, that man was deſign'd for the duties of religion, that ſociety without it would be pure robbery: and that, as it is hard to conceive that men ſhould be wholly deſtroy'd by death, ſo it is directly contrary to the ſentiments of conſcience to deny all rewards for virtue, or puniſhments for vice after this life.

All the diverſities of religion amongſt men are reducible to two kinds.

The firſt is of thoſe who ſuppoſe, that there is more than one God; and this is the belief of all *Pagans* in general.

The ſecond is of thoſe that acknowledge one only God, ſuch are the *Jews*, *Chriſtians*, and *Mahometans*.

Now, as for the cure of different diſeaſes, ſeveral remedies are made uſe of, ſo it is viſible, that to deliver men of their various prejudices, we muſt take very different methods.

The

The ignorance of thoſe barbarous people in the *Indies*, *Tartary*, and *Africa*, muſt be removed, by teaching them the firſt principles, and making them apply the little ſenſe they have left them of good and evil, right and wrong, to the fundamental maxims of religion.

Atheiſts muſt be convinced by reflexions upon thoſe principles, which they admit, by ſhewing, that the truths which they reject, are the natural conſequences of thoſe principles, which they dare not diſpute.

To convince the Heathen, who ſuppoſe many gods, we muſt examine their principles, and confute them; which is the eaſieſt thing in the world; the wiſeſt men having formerly acknowledged, as they alſo own to this very day, that there is but one God.

And indeed it ſeems, that the greateſt part of philoſophers did own a plurality of gods, only in compliance with the opinions of the people, which it was dangerous to contradict.

And as for the *Jews*, foraſmuch as they agree with the *Chriſtians* and *Mahometans* about the unity of God, we are only to prove to them the truth of that which is the very eſſence of the *Chriſtian Religion*, in oppoſition to their prejudices; one may prove this againſt the *Jews* without any trouble, becauſe they are agreed in moſt of thoſe principles, which the *Chriſtian Religion* ſuppoſes. So likewiſe it is eaſily eſtabliſhed againſt the *Mahometans*, who grant the truth of *Chriſtian Religion* in general, but pretend that it ought to give place to *Mahometaniſm*, as the Law ought to give place to the Goſpel, preach'd by Jeſus Chriſt.

My deſign is not to proſecute every one of theſe ways in particular. There are books enough in the world which ſolidly prove the neceſſity of Religion againſt all ſorts of Atheiſts, as well thoſe, who are ſo through ignorance, as thoſe who profeſs themſelves ſuch from love to libertiniſm, and to paſs for men of a mighty reach.

There are alſo ſeveral famous authors, who have made it evident, that reaſon alone is ſufficient to overthrow all *Pagan* religions whatſoever.

I am reſolved to follow a more compendious and ſure method, that is, to demonſtrate the truth of the *Chriſtian Religion*, conſidered by it ſelf.

In ſhort, it is impoſſible (conſidering the oppoſition there is between the *Chriſtian Religion*, and all the other religions in the world) that the *Chriſtian Religion* ſhould be the true, but that all others muſt be falſe in thoſe articles wherein they eſſentially differ from it.

And on the other hand, one cannot explain thoſe arguments which clearly evince the truth of Chriſtianity, without convicting all other religions of falſehood, becauſe they are deſtitute of thoſe proofs, which are peculiar to the *Chriſtian Religion*.

I know very well, that there are ſeveral ways which lead to the end which I propoſe. Men that think much, wiſh that a perfect conformity of the *Chriſtian Religion*, with the conſcience of man might be demonſtrated, from reflexions on the heart of man, and the dictates of it, which to them would be a convincing, and demonſtrative proof.

Others apply themſelves to a ſpeculative examination of the doctrines and proofs of the *Chriſtian Religion*, to ſhew their conformity with the notions of reaſon: I will not deny but that both theſe employ themſelves uſually in this ſort of ſtudy, and that truth finds a conſiderable ſupport from their meditations.

But how uſeful ſoever they may be, I have rather choſen to follow another courſe, as thinking it of more advantage, ſolidly to eſtabliſh the facts which the *Chriſtian Religion* propoſeth; which appears to me to be more proper to perſwade all ſorts of readers, and better levell'd to the ordinary capacity of thoſe, who newly enter upon the examination of this truth.

And as the neceſſity of revelation is generally owned by heathens, and by all other nations of the world: I thought it a thing altogether unneceſſary to enter upon the examination of ſeveral abſtracted queſtions, ſuch as theſe: whether there be any natural knowledge of God, whether men are naturally inclined to be religious, and the like? When I ſhall have firmly proved, that God revealed himſelf, that he preſcribed a ſervice to the firſt men, who left the rules of it to all their poſterity, from whence all the religion that ever was, or is yet in the heathen world, was derived, I ſhall have prevented many very unprofitable diſputes, and which can only perplex the mind by their obſcurity.

I have therefore confin'd my ſelf to certain conſiderations, which do ſo eſtabliſh the truth of the books of the Old and New Teſtament, as by their union they firmly prove the truth of the *Chriſtian Religion*.

I hope, that it will not be thought needful for me to demonſtrate, that the *Mahometan* religion ought not to aboliſh the Chriſtian, as the Chriſtians pretend, that the *Chriſtian Religion* abrogated the ceremonial part of the *Jewiſh* worſhip.

As ſoon as an underſtanding Reader ſhall make ſome reflexions upon the nature of the arguments which demonſtrate the truth of the *Chriſtian Religion*, he may eaſily perceive, that God never framed the model of that religion, which the *Mahometans* would obtrude upon us.

REFLEXIONS

REFLEXIONS

UPON THE

BOOKS OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE

For the Eſtabliſhing of the Truth

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

CHAP. I.

Concerning the FUNDAMENTALS *of the* CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

WE are to conſider three things in the Chriſtian Religion; the Matters of Fact it propounds to us for true, the Promiſes it affords us, and the Worſhip it commands.

The Matters of Fact it propounds to us as true, are; that God created the world, that he formed the firſt man, from whom the reſt of mankind have been propagated, that a while after this man was created, he violated the law, God had given him; and that whereas he deſerved to have periſhed for this his diſobedience, God was pleaſed, inſtead thereof, to comfort him with the hopes of a Saviour which was to be born of the ſeed of his wife; that God hath actually ſent this Saviour into the world, which comprehends the whole œconomy of Chriſt, *viz.* His birth, life, preaching, miracles, death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion into heaven, *&c.*

The

The Promiſes it vouchſafes, are the forgiveneſs of our ſins, the reſurrection of our bodies, and a ſtate abſolutely happy for ever in heaven.

And laſtly, the Worſhip of divine ſervice it preſcribes conſiſts in obedience to the law of God, in prayer for the pardon of our ſins, and his protection, and in a grateful acknowledgement of what we owe him for all his benefits towards us.

The firſt of theſe three parts of the Chriſtian Religion, *viz.* The truth of the Matters of Fact it relates, may be ſaid to be the foundation of the other two, *viz.* The Promiſes and commands.

It is impoſſible to be perſuaded, that God hath created this world in which we live, and made mankind of one and the ſame blood; that after the fall he promiſed to ſave men, and did actually redeem them in ſending Jeſus Chriſt, who ſuffered death, and being raiſed the third day aſcended into heaven, &c. I ſay, it is impoſſible to look upon theſe facts as true without being aſſured that God will accompliſh the promiſes he hath made to us.

And it is as evident that we cannot be convinced of the truth of theſe matters, without being ſenſible of a ſtrong obligation laid upon us to perform all the duties of the Chriſtian religion.

As ſoon as a man reflects upon his being God's creature, he finds himſelf naturally obliged, to obey God univerſally, according to his utmoſt ability: but when he comes further to believe, that God did not deſtroy the firſt man for his diſobedience; but was graciouſly pleaſed to promiſe him a Saviour for himſelf and all his poſterity; and when moreover he is aſſured, that God hath really ſent this Saviour in the way and manner the goſpel relates to us, we cannot conceive, but that he muſt find himſelf under the higheſt engagements imaginable of rendering to God a religious obedience; and believing his promiſes.

But there is yet another obligation whereby man is bound to obey God, to pray to him, and to offer him all manner of religious worſhip; God by redeeming him hath obtained a new claim to, and right over him, and a more indiſpenſable obligation is laid upon man to ſubmit himſelf to God in all religious concerns, as being not only created but alſo redeemed by him.

Reaſon acknowledgeth, that if the truth of theſe things be once admitted, nothing can be more juſt and natural, than thoſe conſequences which the Chriſtians thence infer.

All the difficulty therefore, that occurs in this matter, conſiſts in the proof of thoſe facts which the Chriſtian religion propounds to us; that is to ſay, in proving the creation of the world, the fall of man, the promiſe of a redeemer, his coming into the world, his miracles, death, reſurrection, aſcenſion into heaven, *&c.* which are the foundations of the Chriſtian Religion. And indeed theſe are the very matters of which Atheiſts and Libertines require a ſolid proof.

And it doth the more concern us to ſatisfie their demands; foraſmuch as the Jews, who are ſcatter'd throughout the whole world, do oppoſe our aſſertion, that the promiſe of ſending the Meſſiah is already accompliſh'd, tho' they agree upon the matter with us in all other articles. Moreover the performing this taſk may very much contribute to the converſion

verſion of a great number of bad Chriſtians, whoſe fall and continuance in vices, and licentiouſneſs is to be aſcrib'd to their being ſo weakly perſwaded of the truth of theſe Fundamentals, and that becauſe they have never conſider'd of them with ſufficient attention.

CHAP. II.

That the Christian Religion *is founded upon Proofs of Matter of Fact.*

FORASMUCH as in order to eſtabliſh the truth of the Chriſtian Religion, we confine our ſelves at preſent to thoſe Proofs which make out the Matters of Fact it propoſes; omitting all other arguments, which may evidence the truth of it, tho' poſſibly no leſs convincing; it is obvious, that the proofs we are to produce in confirmation of them, muſt be ſuch as are proper to evince the truth of things long ſince paſt and done.

If we were treating of the events of the time we live in, it might be juſtly required, that we ſhould produce eye witneſſes of them; but forasmuch as the queſtion here is concerning matters long ſince paſt, it is natural for us to have recourſe to hiſtory, which furniſheth us with the relations of thoſe, who were eye witneſſes of the ſame. This being the only way left us to confirm our belief of things at ſo great a diſtance from us.

I am beholding to hiſtory only for the knowledg I have of a *Cyrus*, an *Alexander*, or a *Cæſar*; and yet having read the account they give me of them, I find them matters I can no way rationally doubt of.

I acknowledg that the certainty we have of things long ſince paſt, is much inferiour to that which we have of matters confirm'd to us by eye witneſſes. Nevertheleſs, becauſe it is evident, that the events of ancient times cannot be confirm'd, but by proofs of this nature, it has never entred into the minds of any to account the exiſtence of ſuch men as *Cyrus* and *Alexander* for fables, upon the pretence, that none now alive did ever ſee them, or becauſe there are ſcarce any traces left of thoſe empires of which they were the founders.

Indeed the certainty we have of theſe things is ſuch, as nothing can be ſuperadded to it, for tho' it be founded on the authority of hiſtorians, who liv'd many ages ago, yet withal we are to conſider that the matters related, do not only carry the idea of probability and truth along with them, but that they are the very ground and foundation of all the hiſtories of following ages; which cannot be queſtioned, if we conſider the connexion and dependance of the things related, according to the light of ſenſe, and the equity of reaſon.

A Matter

A Matter of Fact then is accounted certain, when it is atteſted by thoſe who were eye witneſſes of it, when recorded by an hiſtorian, who liv'd amongſt thoſe who had perfect knowledg of it; when the matter is not gainſaid or contradicted by any; if we find it pen'd at a time, when the things could not be related by any otherwiſe than indeed they were, without expoſing themſelves to publick deriſion: and laſt of all, when the matter is found to be of that nature, as none could be ignorant of it, either becauſe it was the intereſt of every one to be inform'd of it, or becauſe the thing was ſo publick that it could not be hid from any, or laſtly becauſe of its natural connexion with all thoſe other events which neceſſarily depend on it.

To ſpeak plain it is very unjuſt to demand either more proofs, or ſuch as are of another nature, for the confirmation of the truth of our religion, than are required to verifie any other matters of fact. Why ſhould not the teſtimony of *Noah*'s children be ſufficient to conclude there was ſuch a man as *Methuſalem* in caſe they aſſure us that they have ſeen him? Or why ſhould not the teſtimony of *Methuſalem* be of credit enough, to prove there was ſuch a man as *Adam*, if he avers that he ſaw him, and convers'd with him? Don't we every day give credit to the account which old men give us of their predeceſſors, eſpecially when we find that what they relate hath an exact reference and connexion with thoſe things we are eye witneſſes of.

But it is an eaſie thing to make it appear, that the proofs which evidence the truth of the matters which our religion propoſeth, are infinitely more ſtrong and convincing.

All the circumſtances we can imagine proper to evince the truth of any relation, do concur to place the matters recorded in holy Scripture beyond the reach of doubt or uncertainty.

We account the ſingle teſtimony of an hiſtorian a ſufficient proof that there was once a very famous temple at *Delphos* or *Epheſus*; notwithſtanding that all the monuments remaining at this day to confirm his relation be very doubtful and defective. Whereas I ſhall make it appear that an entire nation, yea many nations do atteſt the truth of thoſe matters which the Chriſtian Religion propoſes, and that all the actions, diſcourſes, and whole ſeries of events thereto relating, do furniſh us with an infinite number of characters, which invincibly ſignalize the truth of the holy Scriptures.

CHAP. III.

CHAP. III.

Some General Remarks in order to eſtabliſh the Truth of Holy Scripture.

FORASMUCH as I have undertaken to prove the truth of the Matters of Fact contain'd in our Religion from the teſtimony of the penmen of the Old and New Teſtament, it will be proper, in order to the executing of my deſign to begin with a general proof of the truth of the ſaid books, which will not be difficult if one makes the following remarks.

The firſt is, That it appears from the five books of *Moſes*, that he wrote the hiſtory of the creation of the world, and of the promiſe of the Meſſiah; of the deluge, the riſe and pedigree of the ſeveral nations of the world, of the diviſion of tongues; and in particular the hiſtory of the family of *Abraham* until the entring of the children of *Iſrael* into *Paleſtina* 2552 years after the creation of the world.

The ſecond is, That the following books, *viz.* of *Joſhua*, *Judges*, *Ruth*, the four books of *Kings*, of *Chronicles*, with the books of *Ezrah* and *Nehemiah*, are a continuation of the ſaid hiſtory, from the entring of the *Jews* into *Paleſtina*, until their re-eſtabliſhment in the ſaid country, about the year of the world 3600. Here we read the conqueſt of *Paleſtina* under the conduct of *Joſhua*, how it was divided amongſt the tribes after they had deſtroyed, drove out or ſubdued the inhabitants thereof; how often they were brought into bondage by the bordering nations, whoſe riſe and pretenſions *Moſes* ſets down. Here we have recorded the ſeveral names and actions of the judges, which God from time to time raiſed to the Iſraelites, to reſtore them to their firſt eſtate. Here we have an account of the eſtabliſhment of a kingly government amongſt them, which happened about the year 2909; as likewiſe of the diviſion of this people into two kingdomes, which for three ages together were moſt oppoſite in their intereſts, and made great wars againſt each other, as well as againſt their neighbouring ſtates. We find here the utter ruin of the moſt puiſſant of theſe two ſtates, *viz.* That of *Iſrael* by the arms of the kings of *Aſſyria*, about the year of the world 3283, and after that, the deſtruction of that of *Judah*, by *Nebuchadnezar* king of the *Chaldeans*, *anno mundi* 3416. And laſt of all we have an account of the *Jews* reſtoration by *Cyrus* king of *Perſia*, and the ſtate of the *Jews* under his ſucceſſors.

The third thing obſervable is, That in the remaining books of the Old Teſtament we find ſeveral hiſtorical relations relating to both kingdomes, with ſeveral prophecies relating to their decay and reſtoration, as likewiſe many diſcourſes of morality and piety; and that all theſe relations and prophecies appear to have been writ at ſuch a time, and with thoſe circumſtances, which have a natural reference to what the other books recite to us, and an eſſential relation to the books and laws of *Moſes*, which we find to be the foundation of all theſe propheſies, relations,

tions, and whatſoever elſe we find there concerning their government or religion.

The fourth is, That the books of the New Teſtament contain an exact relation of the life of Jeſus Chriſt, who appeared to the world under the reign of *Tiberius*, of the eſtabliſhment of his religion in the world, together with ſome diſputes with the Jews, who refuſed to own him for the Meſſiah promiſed by the Prophets; and laſtly propheſies declaring what in proceſs of time was to happen both to the Jews and Chriſtians until the end of the world. Theſe books take the truth of *Moſes*'s writings every where for granted, as alſo of all the other ſacred writings of the Old Teſtament, both hiſtorical, prophetical, and moral.

Theſe four particulars do in a manner give us an intire idea of the holy Scripture; and we ſhall ſcarcely ſtand in need of ought elſe to manifeſt the truth of thoſe writings, if we conſider thoſe undiſputable matters of fact I am now to ſpeak of, and will but make ſome very natural Reflexions upon them.

The firſt is, That the Chriſtians, notwithſtanding their being divided into ſeveral ſects and parties, preſently after our Saviour's time, have, and do ſtill, in all places, every firſt day of the week, read the books of the New Teſtament tranſlated into their reſpective languages; ſo that it appears abſolutely impoſſible that any ſpurious writings ſhould have been ſlipt in amongſt them.

The ſecond is, That as the Chriſtians have had the books of the Old Teſtament amongſt them in Greek theſe 1600. years, ſo the Heathens had them in that language 300. years before, being tranſlated by order of one of the *Ptolomy*'s kings of *Egypt*, whither a conſiderable party of the Jews were carried, after that *Alexander* the Great had conquered the greateſt part of *Aſia*, having overthrown the empire of *Perſia*, to which the Jews were in ſubjection.

The third is, That tho' the Jews had not all the books of the Old Teſtament from the beginning of their commonwealth, they that followed the party of *Jeroboam*, and formed the kingdom of *Iſrael*, having only had the five books of *Moſes* amongſt them: yet notwithſtanding their irreconcilable hatred againſt the houſe of *David*, they have moſt religiouſly preſerved the ſaid books from *anno mundi* 3030. in which the diviſions of the two kingdoms happen'd, even until this day.

The fourth and laſt is, That as the Jews every where at this day, read the books of *Moſes* and of the Prophets each ſabbath day (which is alſo obſerved by the Samaritanes) and the Chriſtians read them every firſt day of the week; ſo the Jews have always continued to read them for a long ſeries of ages, as eſteeming it a great part of the ſanctification of the ſabbath. Beſides which they alſo ſolemnly read them every ſeventh year in obedience to a law of *Moſes*, as being one of the principal parts of their religion.

I ſay, that the ſole conſideration of theſe matters of fact (which are indiſputable) are ſufficient to prove in general the truth of the books of the Old and New Teſtament.

Firſt then, I affirm, that it is as ridiculous to maintain, that the books of the Old and New Teſtament, tranſlated into ſo many languages, cited by an infinite number of authors, and which have been the ſubject

of various diſputes from the very times of the Apoſtles or ſoon after, ſhould be ſuppoſititious, as to aver, that the books of *Juſtinian*, or *Mahomets* Alcoran, have been falſly obtruded on the world under their names. I ſpeak now only of the books themſelves, not of the truth of the hiſtory they contain.

Secondly, It is ridiculous to ſuppoſe, that the books of the Old Teſtament were forged ſince the time of *Ptolomy Philadelphus*; foraſmuch as they have been in the hands of the heathens themſelves ever ſince that time.

Thirdly, It is as inconſiſtent to ſuppoſe them contrived ſince the time of the ſeparation of the ten tribes from *Judah*, becauſe we find the books of *Moſes* among the Samaritanes, who have preſerved them ever ſince their revolt, without any other change, but what is incident to all manuſcripts, that paſs through many hands.

I grant indeed that the Samaritans have none of the other books of the Old Teſtament; but this being to be look'd upon only as an effect of their departure from the kingdom of *Judah*, it cannot in the leaſt ſhake the certainty we have of thoſe books. For firſt the three other tribes had them and preſerv'd them with the greateſt care, eſteeming them of Divine authority. Secondly, there were alſo reaſons of ſtate, which made the kings of *Iſrael*, not to regard the diviſions made by *Joſhuah* of the land of *Canaan*, nor the authority of the prieſthood; which reaſons of ſtate (hereafter mentioned) where the cauſe why the ten tribes would not allow the ſame authority to ſome of thoſe books, which were written before their revolt, as thoſe of *Samuel*, and the writings of *David* and *Solomon*, which they did to the the Pentateuch of *Moſes*. Moſt of the others we know were pen'd ſince the diviſion of the two kingdomes, and ſo did more particularly reſpect the kingdom of *Judah*, and ſome of them after the carrying away of the ten tribes by the Aſſyrians.

Thus we ſee the truth of theſe booke, and more eſpecially thoſe of *Moſes* confirmed till the time of the revolt of the ten tribes, and confirm'd beyond exception; at leaſt far beyond the certainty we can have of the truth of any other book in the world. It remains only now to examine, whether as to the books of *Moſes* we find not the ſame certainty, when we look back from the departure of the ten tribes to the time of *Moſes*, that is to ſay whether there be the leaſt probability, that they were forged in any part of that interval of about 580 years.

I ſay then in the fourth place, that it is no leſs ridiculous to ſuppoſe them forged during that period. Firſt, becauſe it is impoſſible, that theſe books ſhould have been forged in the form we now ſee them, but that the forgery muſt have been apparent to all the world. Nothing could be more notorious, than whether the Jews did read the law of *Moſes* every ſabbath day in all their families or ſynagogues, and every ſeventh year beſides: Nothing was of more eaſie obſervation than whether they did keep their three ſolemn feaſts, *viz.* That of the paſſover, pentecoſt, and of tabernacles: Nothing could be more apparent than whether the Jews did obey the laws contained in the Pentateuch, whether relating to particular perſons, to tribes, or their lands, and the manner of poſſeſſing of them. Indeed nothing can be imagin'd more

abſurd

abſurd than to ſuppoſe an inſenſible change wrought either in the form of their civil government, or the ceremonies of their religion.

Indeed it is an unſufferable piece of boldneſs to charge the Jews with forging theſe books of *Moſes*, or adulterating of them in this period of time, when it appears they have kept them without any alteration for the ſpace of 2700 years, as hath been ſhewed already: If it be ſaid, that the Jews being divided into two kingdomes, and diſperſed into diſtant countries, were not in a condition to forge or adulterate any of the ſaid books, becauſe it might eaſily have been diſcovered; it may be anſwered, that the ſame reaſons took place in this interval of 580 years, for from the time of *Moſes* to *Rehoboam* they were not only greatly divided amongſt themſelves, but almoſt continually ſubject to neighbouring ſtates, who ſubdued them by turns, as we ſee in the book of *Judges*.

Moreover we are to take notice, Firſt that theſe books of *Moſes* are the riſe and foundation of the laws and cuſtomes of the heathens, as well as of their fictions, which we ſhall have occaſion to point at in the ſequel of this diſcourſe.

Secondly, That the hiſtory contained in the Pentateuch, is evidently confirm'd by the following books of *Joſhuah* and *Judges*, which have an eſſential reference to the ſame, and contain a relation of the publick acts of many nations, atteſted, and acknowledged by heathen authors, who were the mortal enemies of the Jews.

Thirdly, That the ſaid books are ſo cloſely link'd and related to thoſe publick and known actions, that it is impoſſible to ſeparate the laws they contain from the matters of fact atteſted by Pagan hiſtory, or to be ignorant that the form of the Jewiſh government, was nothing elſe, but an execution of the laws contained in the Pentateuch, which equally lays down that platform of their policy and worſhip.

My buſineſs at preſent only is to hint theſe general reflexions concerning the truth of the books of the Old and New Teſtament; tho' the ſequel will oblige me to make ſome more particular reflexions upon each book, when I ſhall come to conſider the ſeveral relations they contain.

I now come to the matter in hand, beginning with the book of *Geneſis*; where we find an account of the creation of the world, the forming of man, the fall, the promiſe of the Meſſiah, the propagation of mankind, the deluge, with other matters until the death of *Joſeph*, which contains the hiſtory of the world for the ſpace of 2369 years.

CHAP. IV.

That the Teſtimony of Moses *concerning the Creation of the World, and the Promiſe of the Meſſiah, is unqueſtionable.*

FORASMUCH as amongſt thoſe matters which *Moſes* relates in the book of *Geneſis*, that of the Creation of the World in ſeven days, and of the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, are ſuch upon

which all the reſt do depend (as I ſhall ſhew hereafter) it is evident, that I muſt make it my buſineſs in a ſpecial manner to evince the truth of the ſame.

Towards the confirmation of which matters of fact, the one of which is, that God created a firſt man; the other, that God hath promiſed in due time to ſend the *Meſſiah* for redemption of mankind from the puniſhment of ſin, I ſhall propoſe theſe following remarks.

Moſes the great law-giver of the *Jews*, laid theſe two matters of fact as the baſis of the laws he was to publiſh; and he relates them to us, as things which were not only known to him, and ſome others of the *Jewiſh* nation, but to all the people of the world; and particularly the whole nation amongſt whom he lived.

To underſtand the force of this argument we muſt mind three things; the firſt is, the nature of the matters themſelves, the other is the character of him that relates them; and the third, the uſe *Moſes* makes of them.

For the firſt, nothing was more needful to be known than theſe two two things before us; they were matters which *concern* the whole world, and of which every one ought to be informed; they are matters about which it is not eaſie to be deceived, every one being in a condition to ſatisfie himſelf about them, and of which conſequently they could not but be moſt throughly informed.

I dare maintain that there are no facts in prophane hiſtory of importance, comparable to theſe of the creation of the world, and the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, as *Moſes* has related them.

2. And as for the author who relates theſe points, it is as plain that his character did wonderfully contribute to the making of his book famous. He was a man illuſtrious, as well by reaſon of his education, as the rank he held amongſt men; a man equally expos'd to the judgment of enemies and friends, and who could not vent the leaſt thing contrary to truth, in matters of great importance, without ſeeing himſelf immediately refuted, or rather without expoſing himſelf to publick ſcorn.

Beſides I aver, and am ready to maintain, that we find no author of ſo illuſtrious a character as *Moſes* was, or who is diſtinguiſh'd with ſo many eſſential marks of faithfulneſs and veracity, as appears throughout the whole tenour of his writings.

3. This will appear more evidently when we conſider the uſe to which *Moſes* deſigns theſe two relations of the creation of the world, and the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*.

In a word, his deſign was not in furniſhing his books with the recitals of theſe important facts to engage others to read them with more attention, or to get himſelf reputation, by exciting a curioſity in people for his books. This would not have been becoming the gravity and wiſdom of ſo great a legiſlator, of whom all ſucceeding ages have borrowed their laws.

It is apparent, that his end in the recording of theſe matters was to inſpire with a ſenſe of piety and religion, thoſe who were committed to his charge.

This is that which in general we may obſerve about theſe matters; but more particularly it is certain, that *Moſes* his end in recording the oracles

oracles by which God promiſed to *Abraham* the eſtabliſhing his poſterity in the land of *Canaan*, was to repreſent to the *Jews* the right they had to that land, according to the deſign and intent of the Divine wiſdom.

But without making this particular reflexion, it is clear, that the law took its beginning at the twelfth of *Exodus*, where God preſcribes to his people the manner of celebrating the paſſover; at leaſt this is the firſt law which God gave them through the miniſtry of *Moſes*; but foraſmuch as *Moſes* his end was to juſtifie in the minds of his people, the deſign he had to make them leave *Egypt* as well as their pretenſions to the land of *Canaan*, whither he was to lead them; it was natural for him to lay before them the ground of thoſe pretenſions, which he could not do without relating the whole ſeries of the hiſtory until the time of their bondage in *Egypt*, which we read in *Geneſis*; the greateſt part of which only concerns the anceſtors of that people, after that *Moſes* had firſt laid down the grounds of religion, and that which was known to all nations.

Let us now imagin to our ſelves a man endeavouring all of a ſuddain to introduce into the world the belief of things ſo far diſtant from common apprehenſion as theſe two points muſt needs be, *viz.* That of the creation, and the promiſe of Chriſt, in caſe we ſuppoſe them generally unknown. Let us yet further conceive a man not only relating thoſe things, but making them the foundation of a new ſort of laws never before heard of. Is there any wit, or judgment in ſuch an undertaking? Can we therefore ſuppoſe that *Moſes*, whoſe writings teſtifie his great wiſdom, ſhould ever have entertain'd ſuch unaccountable thoughts.

I dare aver that there was never any legiſlator ſo ſtupid and inconſiderate, as to pretend to engage a whole people to ſubmit themſelves to the yoke of obedience, and to receive a great number of laws reſpecting their civil government and religion, by declaring to them two fictions, of which they had never before had the leaſt idea.

It is alſo very conſiderable, that theſe things are not recited by *Moſes* as a preface to the Decalogue, as if then firſt they had been propoſed to *Moſes*, or the people by God; but *Moſes* ſets them down as truths known to them all, and as principles, univerſally admitted, and ſuch as the meer mentioning of them could not but ſtrongly engage the *Jews* to render a ready obedience to the laws which God gave to *Moſes* in their preſence of the Divine authority, of which their very ſenſes were convinc'd.

Let us alſo conſider the nature of thoſe things, the relation of which *Moſes* has joined with theſe two general points, to make an impreſſion on the minds of the *Jews*. Let us conſider the account he gives them of their anceſtors, nearer or farther off, whom he repreſents as equally inform'd of theſe matters, as having ſeverally delivered the knowledge of them to their children, and having join'd to theſe firſt truths of the creation, and the promiſe of a Saviour, many other notions thereon depending, and which tied their hopes and expectations, to the land of *Canaan*. And now judge whether *Moſes* were not to be accuſed of great folly and ſenſeleſneſs, if he had proceeded to make ſuch a vaſt people (all of the ſudden) to receive for truths publickly and generally owned, what indeed was nothing but the moſt ridiculous and ill cohering romance that ever was broached.

Now ſince as it is viſible (taking in the circumſtances I have hinted) that the authority of ſuch an hiſtorian and law-giver as *Moſes* was, relating ſuch important matters cannot be call'd in queſtion; it follows, that the Atheiſt can have nothing to object againſt his teſtimony with the leaſt ſhadow or pretence of reaſon. So that we may already aſſert, that there is nothing better atteſted than the creation of the world, and the promiſe of Chriſt, which are the immoveable foundations of the Chriſtian Religion.

Nevertheleſs for a more evident conviction, we are willing, before we draw this concluſion, to make it appear how weak and inconſiderable all thoſe objections are, which Atheiſts can poſſibly frame againſt what *Moſes* relates concerning theſe matters.

What can they with reaſon object? Perhaps they'l ſay, that *Moſes* is not the author of *Geneſis*, but that it was foiſted in under his name, and conſequently, that whatſoever is built upon the authority of *Moſes* and his evidence, is all without ground. Or they may object, that if *Moſes* be indeed the author of *Geneſis*, that he lived at ſuch a diſtance of time from the things which he relates, that it makes void the authority of his writings. They may moreover alledge, that *Moſes* relates things impoſſible, and of which therefore thoſe that mentioned them before, the things themſelves being ſo long ſince paſt and done, could not be fully inform'd of, and that they may well be ſuppos'd greatly changed and alter'd by a tradition of ſo many ages. They may alſo alledge, that according to the common opinion, *Moſes* penn'd not theſe things as an hiſtorian, but as a prophet; and that the apprehenſion of moſt concerning his books are, that he wrote of things, whereof the knowledge before his time, was very obſcure and confuſe, or rather were generally unknown.

They may object againſt theſe relations of *Moſes*, that which the moſt ancient people, ſuch as the *Ægyptians*, *Chaldeans*, and *Chineſe*, alledge for their antiquity, which far ſurpaſſeth the date of the world according to *Moſes*.

Theſe are the principal ways to aſſault the truths which *Moſes* relates, either by maintaining with the Atheiſts on one hand, that the things which *Moſes* relates, are indeed mentioned by other authors, but that they forged them themſelves; or that *Moſes* being an able and refin'd politician deſign'd by creating a belief of theſe matters in the *Jews*, to make them more ſubmiſſive and obedient to him.

In a word, it may be ſaid, that ſuppoſing the book of *Geneſis* to be writ by *Moſes*, it was an eaſie matter for him to dictate whatſoever he pleaſed to a people who were under a law that made it capital to call in queſtion the truth of his relations, or the authority of his laws.

This certainly is the fartheſt, to which the height of obſtinacy can carry this matter, and the very laſt refuge of the ſtrongeſt prejudice. But it is an eaſie matter to confound the Atheiſts and Libertines in every one of theſe articles, and to ſhew that all their objections do in effect ſerve for nothing elſe but to make a more lively impreſſion of this argument taken from matter of fact, which I have undertaken to ſet forth in a full and clear light.

CHAP. V.

CHAP. V.

That Moses *is the Author of the Book of* Genesis.

I SHALL in the ſequel of this diſcourſe make it appear, that we cannot with reaſon, conteſt the authority of a tradition which hath thoſe characters which we find in the relations contain'd in the book of *Geneſis:* the only thing that can be queſtion'd in this matter is, whether *Moſes* the great captain of the *Iſraelites*, and founder of their common-wealth, be the author of it. This therefore is the thing which we ought ſolidly to evince.

Tho' it ſeems that we might diſpenſe with this trouble: foraſmuch as it is eaſie to ſhew, that the greateſt part of the moſt conſiderable events, which are recorded in the book of *Geneſis*, were generally believed by others, as well as the *Jews*.

At leaſt it muſt be granted, that theſe matters have given occaſion to moſt of their fables, *viz.* To that of the chaos, to that of the marriage of *Peleus* and *Thetis*, for the forming of man to that of *Prometheus*, to that of *Jupiter*'s continued laughter for the ſeven firſt days of his life, which they look'd upon as the original of the ſolemnity of the ſeventh day, known amongſt the heathens; to that of the golden age, and of the deluge; to the name of *Deucalion*, to the fable of *Janus*, to that of the diviſion of the world amongſt *Saturn*'s ſons, to the name of *Jupiter Hammon*, to the fable of the *Titans*, and of the changing of women into ſtatues of ſtone; to the ſtories of the inceſt the gods committed with their daughters; to that of the firing of the world by *Phaeton*; and to a great number of other fictions, which cannot be otherwiſe explained, as the learned have ſhewn at large.

Whoſoever was the author of *Geneſis*, whether *Moſes* or another, ſure it is that he was exactly inform'd of the matters he relates, and that he lived ſoon after *Joſeph*.

Firſt then I ſay, that it appears he was fully inform'd of thoſe matters of which he treats; he ſets down the names of the heads or fathers of the ſeveral nations of the world, and does it ſo, that what he ſaith doth very well agree with what the moſt ancient hiſtorians have left us concerning that matter: he ſpeaks of theſe nations, of the countreys they poſſeſt, and their kings, as of things he was perfectly inform'd of: he very carefully diſtinguiſhes the original of theſe ſeveral nations; and the ſame being at that time commonly known, no hiſtorian could repreſent them otherwiſe than they were, without expoſing himſelf to the laughter of all by endeavouring to mix fables with relations of this nature.

In the ſecond place, I ſay, that this book was writ by a man that lived ſoon after *Joſeph*: he ſpeaks very exactly of what *Joſeph* did in his place of chief miniſter to *Pharaoh*; in particular, he ſets down the firſt original of the fifth penny which the *Egyptians* ſo many ages after, continued to pay to their kings, being a thing which no *Egyptian* could be ignorant of.

And lastly, it is visible, that this book serves for an introduction to *Exodus*, and the following books, which have no other foundation, but the truth of those things which are related to us there; and do throughout allude and refer to the several passages of it; and that all matters of religion and worship, contained in them, are founded upon the truth of the creation, and the promise of the *Messiah*, which we find in *Genesis*; and upon the truth of all those other succeeding matters of fact, until the coming of the children of *Israel* into *Egypt*, when *Joseph* was chief favourite, and minister of *Pharaoh*.

But we have yet a more easy way to make out that *Moses*, whose history is contain'd in *Exodus*, and the following books, is the author of *Genesis*.

For first, it cannot be deny'd, that the heathens themselves have acknowledged *Moses* for the most antient law-giver; for this, we have the testimonies of *Plato*, *Polemus*, *Artapanus*, *Pythagoras*, *Theopompus*, and *Diodorus Siculus*, who places *Moses* in the front of six of the most antient law-givers thus; *Moses*, *Sauchnis*, *Sesonchosis*, *Bachoris*, *Amasis*, and *Darius* father of *Xerxes*.

But further, if when the *Lacedemonians* tell us of the laws of their law-giver *Lycurgus*; and the *Athenians* of those of their *Solon*, we think our selves oblig'd to believe them; because naturally every nation is suppos'd to be a faithful depositary of the laws of him who first founded their government; yea, if we do not in the least doubt of these relations, though there be no people at this day, who live according to the laws of *Lycurgus*, or *Solon*; can any valuable reason be imagined, for us to doubt, whether *Moses* wrote the book of *Genesis*, when an entire nation have constantly averr'd, that he did so? I say, when all the *Jews*, who continue at this day, do in all places, where they are scatter'd throughout the world equally, and with one consent, maintain, that they received this book from him, together with the laws and worship therein contain'd? Nay, when it is notorious, that many of them have suffer'd martyrdom in confirmation of this truth?

I omit now to mention the consent of the Christians, who tho' they be not descended of *Abraham*, and do not observe the greatest part of the laws of *Moses*, yet do not cease highly to defend this truth throughout the world, the Gospel in their sense being nothing else, but the literal accomplishment of that promise, *The seed of the woman, shall bruise the head of the serpent*. I shall shew in the sequel of these my Reflexions, with how much justice they assent to this truth; but at present I tie my self only to the testimonies of the *Jews*, and that which confirms the authority thereof,

CHAP. VI.

CHAP. VI.

That the Book of GENESIS *could not be forged under the name of* MOSES.

I SHOULD never have done, ſhould I go about to ſet down all the obſervations which might be made in comparing this book of *Geneſis*, with other hiſtories, commonly known to the world; and whoſe faithfulneſs is unqueſtionable. Without entring upon this compariſon, we may boldly aſſert, that there is no hiſtory in the world, whoſe author we can be ſo ſure of, as that *Moſes* was the penman of *Geneſis*.

But I go further, and aſſert, that the *Jews* could not be miſtaken in the teſtimonies they give to this truth, which I prove by theſe two remarks.

The firſt is, That their obſervations both civil and religious, are at this day founded upon no other principles, than thoſe which we find in *Geneſis*: As for inſtance, they compute the beginning of their day from the preceding evening; they keep the ſabbath, they obſerve circumciſion, they abſtain from eating the muſcle which is in the hollow of the thigh, *&c.* The obſervation of which laws is indeed preſcrib'd to them in the other books of *Moſes*, but the occaſion and ground of them all, is no where to be found but in *Geneſis*, to which all theſe laws have a natural relation.

The ſecond is, That the book of *Geneſis*, taking for granted, that the poſterity of *Abraham*, as well as his anceſtors, had always obſerv'd the ſabbath and circumciſion; and the books of *Moſes*, ordering the ſame to be conſtantly read in every family, to which the ſabbath day was more peculiarly appropriated, and the whole to be read over every ſeventh year, as we know the *Jews* practice was according to the law of *Moſes*; the firſt of which injunctions they practice ſtill in all places, and have left off the other, only becauſe they cannot do it now they are out of their own land: I ſay, ſuppoſing all this, it is abſolutely impoſſible, that any other than *Moſes*, could have made this book to be received.

The forgery at the beginning, would have been palpable, even to children themſelves: as for example, let us ſuppoſe that *Solomon* had form'd a deſign of deceiving the people, in publiſhing the book of *Geneſis*, for a book of *Moſes*; Is it poſſible he ſhould ſo far impoſe on his people, as to make them to receive the ſaid book all at once, as that which had been conſtantly read in their families every ſeventh day, and year, and that for 600 years before his time? and therefore, as a book that had been ſo long in all their families, tho' indeed it was never heard of by them before that time.

If an impoſtor can create a belief in others, that he hath ſome ſecret communication with the Deity; thoſe who are thus perſwaded by him, will eaſily ſubmit themſelves to his laws; but it is abſolutely impoſſible, that a whole people ſhould all at once forget whatſoever they have learn'd,

or

or heard of their parents or fore-fathers, and inſtead thereof, admit of tales forged at pleaſure.

Some nations have been ſo ridiculous, to derive themſelves from a fabulous original, but they never fell into ſuch miſtakes about thoſe things which were at no great diſtance from the time in which they lived.

Beſides, we know that theſe fabulous originals never made ſo lively an impreſſion upon the minds of a whole nation, eſpecially the learned amongſt them, as generally to be believed; but we rather find, that they have endeavoured to reconcile them to truth, by ſhewing ſomething elſe was hinted thereby, as we may ſee by the explication the heathens themſelves have given us of all their fables, and utterly rejected thoſe which they could not reconcile to good ſenſe.

But in this caſe we find a whole nation to this very day maintaining all the matters of fact related in *Geneſis*, and in particular, that of the creation, as of matters whoſe memorial they have conſtantly celebrated every ſeventh day, ſince the time they firſt happened.

Laſtly, It cannot be deny'd, but that this book was conſtantly uſed to be read amongſt the *Jews*, eſpecially on the ſabbath day, and that under the name of *Moſes:* for inſtance, ſince the time of Jeſus Chriſt, or ſince that of *David*. Neither can it be denied, but this conſtant reading was obſerv'd by virtue of a law contain'd in the ſaid book: Now if this law has always been in this book from the firſt appearing of it, which cannot be queſtion'd; how was it poſſible to forge and foiſt in this book under the name of *Moſes* the founder of the *Jewiſh* government. I ſay, this book, which beſides all this, contains ſuch extraordinary matters, and is the very foundation of all their religion.

I will not repeat here what I mention'd in the third chapter, to make the vanity of thoſe men appear, who imagine the book of *Geneſis*, and the four that follow it, might have been forged by others, under *Moſes* his name: yet I think I ought, before I proceed further, to remove a ſeeming difficulty, which is often alledg'd by this ſort of people: for ſay they, it cannot be, that theſe books were ever read, with that care and conſtancy we ſpeak of, becauſe a time can be pointed at, wherein the ſaid book was wholly unknown in the kingdom of *Judah*; and indeed, the hiſtory plainly informs us, that the book of the law was found again in the reign of *Joſias*, from whence they infer, that if it were then unknown, it might as well be forged.

But indeed, they may conclude from hence, that which willingly we allow them, that there was a time wherein ungodlineſs did prevail, and idolatry was publickly eſtabliſh'd in the kingdom of *Judah* it ſelf, yet can they not from this inſtance draw any other conſequence which might ſupport their pretenſions.

They muſt needs acknowledge firſt, that the books of *Moſes* were not only amongſt the three tribes, but alſo amongſt the ten, ſince the time of their revolt under *Rehoboam*; that they who were carried by *Salmanaſſar*, into the land of *Aſſyria*, had the ſaid books amongſt them, as well as thoſe of the ten tribes, who were left in their own countrey. Thus we ſee, that when the king of *Aſſyria* ſent ſome of the prieſts of *Samaria*

Samaria to inſtruct the colony which he had ſetled in their countrey, in the law of God; it is not ſaid, that thoſe prieſts went to borrow the law of *Moſes* from them of *Judah*, nor that the ſaid laws was altogether unknown in that countrey; but only that they had formerly violated the law of God, in ſerving ſtrange Gods, as they ſtill did, but that withal, they kept the law of God, which to this day is yet found among their poſterity.

Secondly, It is evident that tho' the wickedneſs and violence of *Manaſſeh*, cauſed a great change in matters of religion, yet not ſo great, but that his ſubjects notwithſtanding, had ſtill the books of *Moſes* amongſt them; the blood which he ſhed in *Jeruſalem*, was an evident ſign, that there were ſome godly men left amongſt them, who continued true to their religion, and obſerved the laws of God. Beſides, if we conſider his repentance, we muſt conclude, that towards the end of his reign, he did in ſome degree, re-eſtabliſh the purity of that religion he had before prophaned, a main part of which, was the expounding and reading of the books of *Moſes*, according to thoſe laws before mention'd.

In the third place it is viſible, that the reaſon why *Hilkiah*, having found the book of the law in the temple as they were cleanſing and repairing it, ſent the ſame to *Joſiah*, was not becauſe there was no other ſuch book left in *Judah*, but becauſe the ſaid book being written by the hand of *Moſes* himſelf, there ſeem'd to be ſomething very extraordinary in the finding of it at that very time, when they were endeavouring a reformation; and it was this circumſtance which did in a more particular manner excite the zeal of this good prince. And indeed, if we ſuppoſe that *Joſiah* had never before ſeen the book of the law, how could he have apply'd himſelf to the reforming of his countrey, his people, and the temple, in the manner which is recorded in the book of Kings? How could a ſufficient number of copies of it be diſperſed over all his kingdom in an inſtant, to inform the people about the ceremonials of the paſſover, which ſoon after was ſo ſolemnly celebrated by them? Or, how is it poſſible, that the *Levites*, the prieſts, and people, could have been all of the ſuddain inſtructed in all the points to be obſerved in the performing of that holy ſolemnity.

It is apparent, that the ſacred Hiſtorian did for no other reaſon take notice of this circumſtance, that the book found, was of *Moſes* own hand writing, but to make it appear, that their devout reſpect for this book, was not wholly ſtifled, as having been by them carefully hid from the fury of their idolatrous kings, and laid up in ſome ſecret place of the temple, where now they had ſo happily found it again.

Over and above what hath been ſaid already, we are to obſerve, that how great ſoever the wickedneſs of the kings of *Juda* and *Iſrael* was, as well as that of their ſubjects, yet the ſame generally conſiſted in nothing elſe, but the imitation of the worſhip of their neighbour nations, as to ſome particulars, which tho' they were forbid by the law, yet they left the far greater part of their religion in full force. This we have an inſtance of in the time of *Ahab*, where we find *Elijah* reproaching the *Iſraelites* with the monſtrous alliance they had made betwixt the worſhip of God, and that of *Baal*, which queen *Jeſabel* had introduc'd.

All

All this clearly proves, that the book of *Geneſis*, which is the firſt of the books of *Moſes*, was never forged under his name, ſince it was always owned as the writing of that famous author, and is ſtill ſo acknowledged by the *Jews* at this day.

CHAP. VII.

That it appears from GENESIS, *that the Sabbath was conſtantly obſerved from the Beginning of the World until* MOSES.

THE other objection of the Atheiſts (ſuppoſing that *Moſes* was the author of *Geneſis*, as we have now proved) is this, that it ſeems abſurd to give credit to the relations of a perſon who lived ſo many ages diſtant from the things he recites. To anſwer this objection we muſt firſt of all declare to them, by what means the memory of the fact which *Moſes* relates was preſerv'd ſo lively and entire, as to give *Moſes* ſo diſtinct a knowledge of them, and that it was not in his power to forge or add any thing of his own, it being a thing known to the whole world, as well as himſelf.

There is no way whereby we can more ſolidly evince, that it is impoſſible the creation of the world ſhould be forged by *Moſes*, than by making it appear, that the law of the ſabbath hath a natural relation to the creation of the world, and that it hath been always conſtantly obſerved from that time until *Moſes*. The ſame alſo will help us clearly to conceive after what manner the memory of the promiſe of the *Meſſiah* hath been preſerv'd ſo diſtinct amongſt thoſe that lived ſince the creation until *Moſes*. We are no ſooner inform'd that the ſabbath is a ſolemn day, ordain'd at firſt to celebrate and perpetuate the memory of the creation, but we judge it impoſſible, that ſo important an event commemorated every ſeventh day, by vertue of a Divine law, ſhould be an impoſture. But foraſmuch as this impoſſibility is grounded on theſe two propoſitions; the one, that God gave this law of the ſabbath to the firſt man; the other, that the ſame was obſerved by his poſterity ever ſince, till the time of *Moſes*; and that God only renew'd it in the law given from mount *Sinai*: theſe are the truths I am now to clear, and it is of more importance to be proved, becauſe, tho' the generality of authors, ancient and modern, *Jews* as well as *Chriſtians*, are of this opinion, yet there are ſome of the Chriſtian fathers, who ſeem to deny that the ſabbath was ever obſerv'd by the Patriarchs. But it will be an eaſie matter to prove from *Moſes*, that the antiquity of the ſabbath is ſuch as I aſſert, and at the ſame time to demonſtrate the truth of the creation, as well as of the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, which in a manner immediately follow'd it.

Moſes in the ſecond chapter of *Geneſis*, expreſſes himſelf thus: *And God bleſſed the ſeventh day and ſanctified it, becauſe that in it, he had reſted from*

from all his work, which he had created (*a*): which words clearly evince a ſolemn conſecration of the ſeventh day to God's ſervice, by its being made a commemoration of his finiſhing the creation of the heavens and the earth.

But becauſe it may be ſaid, that the intent of *Moſes* in this place was only to ſet down the reaſon why God ſet apart this day, of all others, to his ſervice, by the law at mount *Sinai*, we are to take notice, that this appointment was made for man's ſake already placed in the garden of *Eden*. This we may gather from the order *Moſes* obſerves. For he ſets down firſt the formation of man on the ſixth day, and his being plac'd in Paradiſe, which he gives a more particular account of in the ſecond chapter, and after theſe, he relates God's reſting from his works, and the conſecration of the ſabbath with the reaſon of that law which he impos'd on man; and then adds, *Theſe are the generations of the heavens and of the earth, when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the heaven and the earth.* All that precedes theſe words, is only a relation of what paſs'd in the ſeven firſt days, and that which *Moſes* ſets down concerning God's bleſſing of the ſeventh day, and his conſecrating it, ought as well to be accounted a law appointing the ſeventh day for his ſervice, as thoſe other bleſſings, given to the creatures according to their kinds, are acknowledged as inviolable laws of God, by virtue whereof they ſubſiſt, and are perpetuated each according to their kind, by the way of generation.

In the ſecond place, it is very remarkable, that the Patriarchs, maintain'd a publick worſhip, at leaſt ſince the time of *Seth*; which it was neceſſary ſhould be determined to ſome certain day; and ſince we find, that even at this time they diſtinguiſh'd between beaſts clean and unclean, with reſpect to their ſacrifices (which they could not do but from revelation) we have much more reaſon to conclude, that God had ſet apart a time for his own worſhip and ſervice.

And indeed, there are many evident ſigns, that even then the 7 day was obſerved (*b*). I will not here peremptorily aſſert that antient tradition of the *Jews*, which tells us, that the ninety ſecond Pſalm, whoſe title is *a Pſalm for the Sabbath*, was made by *Adam* himſelf, who was made on the evening of the ſabbath: but this I dare aſſert, that it is apparent, that what we read in the eighth chapter of *Geneſis* (*c*) about the deluge, doth refer to this cuſtom, where we find *Noah* ſending forth the dove and the raven on the ſeventh day, which plainly hints to us his obſerving of that day; for it ſeems, that *Noah* having, in an eſpecial manner, on that ſolemn day, implored the aſſiſtance of God in the aſſembly of his family, he expected a particular bleſſing from it.

And we cannot but make ſome reflexion on that which we read in the XXIX of *Geneſis* concerning the term of a week ſet apart to the nuptials of *Leah*, where at the twenty ſeventh verſe *Laban* thus expreſſes himſelf. *Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this alſo, for the ſervice which thou ſhalt ſerve with me yet ſeven other years* (*d*). This week here doth ſo plainly ſignifie a week of days that it cannot be more naturally expreſs'd; and indeed, all generally underſtand by this week of the marriage feaſt of

(*a*) Gen. ii. 3. (*b*) *Kimchi Præfat. in Pſalmos.*
(*c*) Gen. viii. 10. 12. (*d*) Gen. xxix. 27.

of *Leah*, that term of time which in ſucceding ages hath been cuſtomary to allot to nuptial feſtivals, as appears from the book of *Eſther*, where the wedding feaſt of *Vaſthi* laſted ſeven days, this term of ſeven days, having ſo long ſince been conſecrated to nuptial rejoycings.

The ſame we may alſo gather from the time which was ordinarily allotted to mourning for the dead, to which we find the Patriarchs allotted a term proportion'd to that of their rejoicing. For as we ſee that the *Egyptians* mourned ten weeks for *Jacob*, becauſe of his quality, as being the father of *Joſeph*, ſo we find that *Joſeph*, and thoſe that accompanied him, mourned ſeven days at his enterment in the land of *Canaan*: and as we find, that this cuſtom was perpetually afterwards obſerv'd by the *Jews*, as appears from *Eccleſiaſticus* XXII. 12. ſo likewiſe we find the ſame obſerved by the *Aſiaticks*, as may be ſeen in the hiſtory of *Ammianus Marcellinus*, at the beginning of his nineteenth book, and from them it paſſed to the Chriſtians, as we find in St. *Ambroſe* (*e*).

Thirdly, It appears from *Exod.* VII. 25. that God obſerved ſeven days (*f*) after he had ſmote the river to change the waters thereof into blood; from whence the *Jews* conclude, that the three plagues, *viz.* that of blood, of frogs, and of lice, abode on the land of *Egypt* ſix days, and were withdrawn on the ſeventh, which is the ſabbath.

We may alſo gather, if we calculate the time exactly, that the *Jews* in *Egypt* obſerved the ſabbath. We find from the hiſtory of their departure out of *Egypt*, that the ſame happened on a *Thurſday*, being the fifteenth of the month *Niſan*, and the day in which they ſung thoſe hymns of deliverance, was the ſabbath which God had particularly ſet apart for this week.

It is alſo evident from *Exod.* XVI. that the keeping of the ſabbath was obſerv'd by the *Iſraelites*, before the law was given on mount *Sinai*. For we find God ſpeaking there concerning the ſabbath, not as of a thing newly inſtituted, but as of an antient law, which they were not to tranſgreſs by gathering the manna on that day; for he orders them to gather a double portion the ſixth day, and not to gather any on the ſeventh. We ſee that the *Iſraelites* reſting on the ſeventh day is here ſuppoſed a known and cuſtomary thing, preſcribed to them by a law of old.

They who went forth to gather manna on the ſeventh day are repreſented as tranſgreſſors of a known law, as appears from the words of the Lord to *Moſes*. *How long refuſe ye to keep my commandments and my laws?* *Moſes* alſo ſpeaks of the ſabbath which was to be the next day, as of a thing cuſtomary, and received amongſt them. *To morrow* (ſaith he, at *v.* 23.) *is the reſt of the ſabbath of holineſs unto the Lord*; words which would have been unintelligible to the *Iſraelites*, and expreſs'd a law, altogether impracticable, in caſe they had been deſtitute of any further knowledge concerning it, and had not been acquainted, that it was the very day in which the great work of creation had been finiſhed.

My fourth obſervation I take from the very words of the Decalogue, where firſt of all we find God ſpeaking in this manner, *Remember the ſabbath*

(*e*) *De fide Reſur. in obitu Sat.* p. 321.

(*f*) Seven days were fulfilled after that the Lord had ſmote the river. *Jalkut* in h. l.

ſabbath day (*g*); which words clearly import, that the law he gave, was not a new law, but indeed as old as the world, and which had been obſerved by their forefathers. It ſeems probable alſo, that God expreſſes himſelf in theſe terms, becauſe the tyranny of *Pharaoh* had forc'd them to break this law, by obliging them to deliver their tale of bricks every day, without excepting the ſabbath, which before he had allowed them to keep.

This is explained very diſtinctly in the fifth of *Exodus*, and ſeems to have been the occaſion of *Moſes*'s demanding ſtraw of *Pharaoh*, for the *Iſraelites* to go and ſacrifice, in anſwer to which demand, *Pharaoh* (*h*) expreſſes himſelf in terms which ſhew that formerly they had obſerved a reſt on that day: however it be, yet thus much is apparent, that God commands them to make their bond ſervants to obſerve the ſabbath, becauſe the *Egyptians* by their example inclin'd them not to be very careful in exempting them from all labour on that day.

Moreover, in the ſecond place we are to take notice, that in the laſt words of the fourth commandment, God ſpeaks of it as of a thing formerly appointed and determin'd by him, ſaying, *For in ſix days the Lord made heaven and earth, and reſted the ſeventh day, wherefore the Lord bleſſed the ſabbath day, and hallowed it*; which words have a manifeſt, and undeniable reference to that which happen'd the ſeventh day after the creation, and to the law then given to man concerning it.

We may gather from the fourth chapter of the epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, that the ſenſe which we have put upon the third verſe of the ſecond of *Geneſis*, is the ſame which the *Jews* have always had of it. The Apoſtle diſcourſing from thoſe words of *David*, Pſal. XCV. *To whom I ſware in my wrath, that they ſhould not enter into my reſt*, doth ſuppoſe a threefold reſt, the firſt of which, is the reſt of the ſabbath, of which mention is made in the ſecond of *Geneſis*, where we have the firſt inſtitution of it; the ſecond was the reſt in the land of *Canaan* promiſed to the *Jews* upon their enduring all thoſe tryals in the wilderneſs: the third, the reſt in heaven, of which the two foregoing were but the figures. He argues therefore, that theſe words of *David* could not be underſtood, concerning the ſabbath day; foraſmuch as from the beginning of the world men entred into that reſt of the ſabbath; and he proves this, by that paſſage in *Geneſis*, of which he only cites the firſt words, *viz.* That *God reſted the ſeventh day from all his works*, as ſuppoſing that the *Jews*, to whom he wrote, had no need of having the following words quoted to them, which tell us, that *God bleſſed the ſeventh day and hallowed it:* that is, he conſecrated the ſame to his worſhip and ſervice, foraſmuch as nothing was more publickly and univerſally known amongſt them, the obſervation of the ſabbath being a thing generally received, even before the giving of the law.

And indeed, tho' *Philo* the *Jew* be of opinion, that the practice of ſolemnizing that day, had ſuffer'd ſome interruption; and that for this reaſon, the law of the ſabbath was given to *Moſes*, yet it is well known firſt of all, that *Ariſtobulus* the *Peripatetick* (*i*), in a treatiſe dedicated by him to *Ptolemy*, ſurnamed *Philadelphus*, cites ſeveral paſſages of *Homer*, *Heſiod*,

(*g*) Exod. xx. 8. (*h*) Exod. v. 5.
(*i*) *Euſeb.* præp. Evang. l. 13. c. 12.

Heſiod, and *Linus*, heathen poets, which mention the ſeventh day as a feſtival, and ſolemn day, becauſe all things were finiſhed in the ſame.

In the next place, it is notorious, that if ſome of the fathers, as *Juſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian* writing againſt the *Jews*, have deny'd that the Patriarchs obſerved the ſeventh day, they did ſo rather with regard to the rigor of that law, which forbad all manner of work on that day upon pain of death, (which was ſuperadded by God to the firſt law of the ſabbath) than to the obſervation of the ſabbath, as it was a day appointed to make a ſolemn commemoration of the creation of the world.

In a word, we are to take notice, that the difference which God makes between the ſabbath, obſerv'd by the Patriarchs, and that which he appointed to the *Jews*, did conſiſt in two things: Firſt, in that God did impoſe an abſolute neceſſity upon the *Jews* to abſtain from all manner of work, even to the very dreſſing of meat, neceſſary for the ſupport of life: we find this diſtinction clearly expreſs'd in the law which God gave concerning the firſt and ſeventh day of the feaſt of unleavened bread, for he abſolutely forbids all manner of work on theſe two days, as much as on the ſabbath, even the preparing of neceſſary food, which he permits the five other days, forbidding only ſervil laborious works.

Secondly, In that the working on that day by the law is made puniſhable with death, which was not ſo before; which innovation, and new rigour of the law, eſtabliſhed by God, was authorized, by the puniſhing of him who had gathered ſticks on the ſabbath day, whereas we find, that before the law was given upon mount *Sinai*, God did not command thoſe *Jews* to be puniſhed with death, who went forth the ſeventh day to gather manna, according to their ancient cuſtom of dreſſing their meat on that day.

Let me add this further, that tho' the Apoſtles had aboliſhed the rigour of the law concerning the ſabbath, introduced by *Moſes*, yet they themſelves obſerved it; which practiſe of theirs, in all probability, gave occaſion to the Chriſtians, for almoſt four centuries, to keep the ſabbath as well as the firſt day of the week, ſolemnizing both thoſe days, the one as a commemoration of the creation of the world, and the other of the reſurrection of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

But whatever judgment may be paſt on this laſt remark, it is very evident from *Geneſis* and *Exodus*: firſt, that the law of the ſabbath was obſerved before *Moſes*: ſecondly, that this obſervation was by the firſt Patriarchs propagated among the heathens alſo, as well as the idea of the creation; or as the practice of ſacrificing, with the other parts of religious worſhip, the original whereof, may be ſeen in the book of *Geneſis*, as we ſhall make appear in our following diſcourſe.

After all this, we muſt conclude againſt the Atheiſt, that either *Moſes* muſt imprudently have laid a ſnare for himſelf, in forging a matter of fact, of which, not only the *Jews*, but all the world were able to convince him, ſince there were none amongſt them but muſt needs be conſcious whether they had obſerved the ſabbath in commemoration of the creation, as he relates it, or no; or elſe, that the creation of the world, being a matter of fact ſo generally known, and the memorial of it ſolemnized every ſeventh day by all thoſe who preceded him, muſt needs be an unconteſted and immoveable truth, which I ſhall farther evince

by

by thoſe obſervations which I ſhall raiſe from the dependance and connexion, which the matters related by *Moſes* in *Geneſis*, have with the creation, and the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*. This is my buſineſs at preſent, in performing of which I ſhall make it appear, that nothing can be imagin'd more rational and coherent, than the relations of *Moſes*, in which the Atheiſts imagine, that they diſcover ſo great abſurdities.

CHAP. VIII.

That Adam *was convinced of his Creation, by Reaſon and Authority.*

THO' it might be thought more natural in theſe our diſquiſitions about the hiſtory of *Geneſis*, to begin with thoſe matters which happened near the time of *Moſes*, and from them to paſs to thoſe at a greater diſtance, yet I have choſen rather to follow the thread of *Moſes* his diſcourſe, hoping that this method will afford more light to theſe our Reflexions: at leaſt, it will ſpare me the trouble of frequent repetitions, which in the other way I ſhould be neceſſarily oblig'd to. I begin then with this, *That* Adam *was convinced of his Creation, both by Reaſon and Authority.*

The creation of *Adam* being a thing of that nature, that he muſt firſt be convinced of it himſelf, before he could perſwade his poſterity to entertain the belief of it, it is worth our enquiry to know what ways he had to aſſure himſelf, that he was indeed created in that manner as *Moſes* relates. And, foraſmuch as the certainty of this tradition depends upon the authority of *Adam*, whom *Moſes* ſuppoſes to have been the firſt deliverer of it: it is plain, that we muſt be aſſured that *Adam* could not deceive himſelf in this matter, as it is evident enough that he would not deceive his children, when he took care to inſtruct them concerning it.

As to his own exiſtence, he could not but be as ſtrongly perſwaded of it, as we are of ours, all the difficulty lying in the manner how he came to exiſt. Now there were two ways by which *Adam* might inform himſelf of this, *viz.* by reaſon, and the teſtimony of authority. He could eaſily find out this ſecret by a rational reflexion: or, he might alſo be perſwaded of it by God himſelf, who had created him, not to mention now any information which he might have from the angels who were witneſſes of his creation.

It appears, that *Adam*, whoſe tradition *Moſes* has recorded, ſuppoſes, that he had learnt of God himſelf the manner of his own formation. God ſpeaks to *Adam*, and ſanctifies the ſeventh day; that is, obliges *Adam* to keep the memorial of his creation, he ties him by a law to commemorate his creation fifty two times a year, and to render him continual thanks for the being he had received.

But, foraſmuch as *Adam* was capable of making reflexions upon thoſe ſeveral matters, which God had made known to him concerning his

creation: I ſay, it cannot be imagin'd, but that he muſt have taken theſe things into conſideration, and have been convinc'd of the truth of them, by the light of reaſon.

The truth of a relation conſiſting in its conformity, with the matter related, it appears clearly, that *Adam* could certainly know the truth of what God had declared to him, by examining the things themſelves.

We may diſtinguiſh ſeveral propoſitions in the revelation God made to him concerning the manner of his creation.

The firſt was, That his body was taken from the earth.

The next, That his ſoul was not framed before his body.

The third, That his ſoul had been joyned to his body to conſtitute one individual perſon.

The fourth, That he was created in a full and perfect age.

The fifth, That his wife was formed of a rib, taken out of his ſide, during the time that he was caſt into a deep ſleep.

Theſe are the truths I propoſe as inſtances, the rather becauſe there is not one of them of which *Adam* himſelf could be a witneſs.

And yet I affirm, there is none of theſe which he could not be aſſured of by the light of reaſon, being convinc'd of them by the ſame means which aſſured him of the exiſtence of his ſoul and body. The conſideration therefore of theſe two matters, was of good uſe to confirm the revelation which God had vouchſafed him concerning his creation, of which he could not be a witneſs himſelf.

That his body was taken from the earth, *Adam* might eaſily infer from the food that maintain'd it; for what is the matter of man's nouriſhment, but a digeſted, and diſguiſed earth? And finding himſelf, at firſt, in a perfect eſtate, it was natural for him to judge that his body had been thus at once framed of the earth, without paſſing thoſe ſeveral degrees of growth, whereby children arrive to their juſt ſtature.

And he might as eaſily be aſſured, that his ſoul was not formed before his body. The ſoul is a being, conſcious of his own operations and thoughts, wherefore he needed only make this reflexion: *My ſoul has had neither knowledge nor thoughts before it was united to my body; therefore my ſoul did not exiſt before it.* No great ſtudy was required to make ſo natural a concluſion as this is.

Again, how could he be ignorant of the union of his ſoul with the body? Was it not obvious for him to be aſſur'd hereof, by the ready obedience which he ſaw his body yield unto his ſoul? He had the idea of a tree, as well as the idea of his foot or arm, whence it was eaſie for him to reflect thus: *How comes it to paſs, that I command my feet and my arms, and that I cannot do the ſame to a ſtone or tree, tho' I have the idea of the one, as well as of the other?* Muſt not this proceed from a nearer union it hath with the one, than with the other? He knew that this union continued during his ſleep, and was independent of his will. In a word, he had the ſame proofs of this union, which we have of it at preſent, only they were in him much more lively, becauſe our infancy makes us in ſome ſort ignorant of the nature of our ſouls, our ſouls accuſtoming themſelves by little and little, to depend upon the ſenſes, ſo

as

as not to be able to raiſe themſelves, without ſome trouble, above their operations.

Neither was it leſs evident to *Adam*, that he was produced at a perfect age: He ſaw that his food maintain'd life, and he knew aſſuredly, that he had not taken any but very lately: How then could he attain to that ſtature without that help? Or how was it that he found himſelf now ready to faint, if he deferr'd to take it, which formerly he had not felt the want of? Theſe reflexions made it unqueſtionable to him that he was formed in a perfect age.

And laſtly, it was yet more eaſie for him to be perſwaded of the truth of God's revelation concerning the forming of *Eve*, he needed but to count his own ribs, and thoſe of his wife, for he could not find one leſs in himſelf than in his wife, without being fully ſatisfied in that matter.

Theſe propoſitions, with many others of like nature, being ſuch as *Adam* could be aſſur'd of the truth of, by making reflexion either on himſelf, or on plants, or living creatures, greatly confirming his belief in the Divine teſtimony, concerning his creation, we may eaſily infer, that *Adam* could not deceive himſelf about that matter.

CHAP. IX.

That Adam *was confirmed by his own Experience, in the Perſwaſion he had entertain'd concerning his Creation.*

WHEN I take for granted, that *Adam* could ſatisfie himſelf concerning the truth of God's revelation, by ſome natural and eaſie reflexions, I don't find how any can think ſtrange of this hypotheſis, except ſome, perchance, might think that I make *Adam* too contemplative.

But if any will be pleas'd to make theſe following obſervations, they will juſtifie me, that I have attributed nothing to him, but what agrees exactly with his character.

The firſt is, That *Adam* finding himſelf immediately upon his creation, at his full and perfect age, he was void of thoſe prejudices, which the ignorance and weakneſs of his infancy are the cauſe of; his mind was not tainted with popular errors, which oft are ſo great a hindrance to the knowledge of truth: He had not yet received any ill impreſſion; and when afterwards he was ſo credulous as to give way to a temptation, his experience prov'd a moſt powerful means to inform his reaſon, and withdraw him from his error.

Beſides, we ſuppoſe here, that the Divine teſtimonie, which acquainted him with the particular circumſtances of his creation, was precedent to the reflexions *Adam* made, and indeed, was the cauſe of them. If we ſuppoſe ſome countrey-man, not capable of diſcovering of himſelf, all on a

ſuddain, the manner how ſuch a thing came to paſs, yet this is certain, that his reaſon alone will be able to ſatisfie him, whether the thing happened in that manner which the relation of it imports, he needs but conſult the rules of probability to be determin'd in this matter.

Adam had not only the advantage of being formed at a perfect age, of being acquainted by the mouth of God himſelf, about the creation of the world, *&c.* and of living ſo many ages, which gave him leiſure enough to conſider the probability of what God had revealed to him, to examine the grounds and certainty of it, and in a word, to judge whether the ſaid reflexions were to be rejected as fabulous, or to be relyed on as of moſt certain and evident truth: But over and above all this, *Adam* could rationally aſſure himſelf of the manner how the things (which he had not ſeen) were done by the experience he had of other matters, which were comprehended in the Divine revelation.

The manner how his body had been formed of the earth, was, I confeſs, a thing difficult to be conceiv'd, but the production of an infant like to himſelf, by the way of generation, which he afterwards was aſſured of by experience, was ſufficient to confirm his mind in the belief of the Divine revelation: the way of generation, being at leaſt as much, if not more difficult to comprehend, as the manner of his creation.

We have great reaſon to ſuppoſe, that as it was *Adam*'s duty, that ſo he did really make thoſe reflexions, I have attributed to him, if we conſider, that God gave him a law proportion'd to the ſtate in which he was created: for this law ſuppoſes that *Adam* own'd himſelf God's ſubject; that he conſider'd God as his great benefactor, that he hop'd for rewards from him, and fear'd to be puniſh'd by him.

And laſtly, If I ſhould grant that theſe reflexions did not at firſt make ſo deep an impreſſion in his heart, yet at leaſt, it cannot be deny'd, but that after his fall, he was in a manner neceſſitated to meditate on theſe truths: God appeared to him in a viſible manner, God paſſed ſentence upon him, his wife, and the ſerpent; God condemn'd the ſerpent, and afforded his grace to man; God made him a promiſe proportion'd to the evil into which he was fallen. The woman had deceiv'd her huſband, which did naturally tend to diſunite them, but God uniting himſelf again with *Adam*, made the effect of his promiſe to depend upon *Adam*'s reunion with his wife, having aſſured him, that the offspring of his wife ſhould be his Redeemer: God threatned the woman with extream pains in child-bearing, he drave them out of the garden of *Eden*, and placed a flame of fire to guard the entrance there.

All this without doubt, would never ſuffer *Adam* ſlightly to paſs over matters of ſo great importance as his creation, and the manner of his being formed out of the earth. Things being thus ſtated, it is eaſie to judge whether we have ſuppoſed *Adam* too ſubtil and contemplative by attributing the aforeſaid reflexions to him.

CHAP. X.

CHAP. X.

That the CHILDREN *of* ADAM *had Reaſon to be convinc'd of the Creation.*

IT is apparent, that as ſoon as the children of *Adam* were arrived to years of underſtanding, they were in a condition to make reflexions on the manner of their production, according to the information receiv'd of their parents. They were able to compare the twofold original of man; the one, in which the body was immediately taken from the earth; the other, in which it was produc'd by generation, and were able to judge if either of them were improbable; and in particular, whether the formation of their parents, with other matters conſequent, and depending on it, could be ſufficiently proved and confirm'd.

For it was eaſie for them to judge, that their parents, of whoſe tenderneſs and care they had ſo great experience, could not have had the leaſt deſign to deceive them in what they had deliver'd to them concerning the creation. They had alſo leiſure enough during the long lives they enjoy'd, to examine the ſolidity of thoſe reaſons which perſwaded their parents of the truth of their creation.

For inſtance, they could eaſily inform themſelves whether there were any more men and women than their father and mother, that had been before them, whether they were produced from the earth, or by a fortuitous concourſe of atoms, whether there were any other language beſides that which they ſpake? Whether there were any ruins of buildings, or other remains which ſignified that arts had been formerly cultivated? And in a word, whether there were any reaſon to perſwade them, that the world had not its beginning at the time which their parents aſſigned for it?

Neither were they only in a condition to judge of the truth of theſe things, but their ſenſes were able to convince them of it: as for inſtance, by ſeeing the firſt trees, the production of others from them, and the different degrees of their growth.

But beſides all this, they could experience moſt of theſe things in their own perſons, they could know whether God had aſſigned to man the fruit of trees, and grain for their food, as *Moſes* has recorded, only by examining their own mouths, which were formed to chew fruits, and not to tear the raw fleſh of animals, which requires ſharper and ſtronger ſets of teeth, than thoſe they found themſelves provided with, the eating of fleſh not being introduced till after the deluge.

Thus after the act of generation, they ſaw their children born, as it was repreſented to them, that they themſelves had been formed.

They had alſo before their eyes ſenſible ſigns of the truth of the matters related to them: as for inſtance, the continual miracle of a flame of fire, which kept them from entring into Paradiſe, was a certain argument of the firſt ſin, of which they had not been eye-witneſſes.

The pains of a woman in child-bearing, did the more confirm the truth of the Divine ſentence, becauſe it was not obvious for them to apprehend ſuch conſequences from an act which was pleaſing to their ſenſual appetites.

And laſtly, Foraſmuch as they kept a ſolemn day to celebrate the memory of the world's nativity, on which ſeventh day, their parents repeated to them no leſs than two and fifty times a year, the ſame thing, informing them of the manner of their formation; 'tis impoſſible to ſuppoſe, that they ſhould let theſe things paſs without making any reflexion on the truth of them, and the rather becauſe we cannot rationally conceive, that they ſhould have been ſerious in any duties of religion, without having firſt examin'd the truth of the creation, and of the promiſe of a Redeemer, which are the true grounds of all religious acts whatſoever.

CHAP. XI.

That the Children *of* Adam *were actually convinced of the Truth of the Creation, and the Promiſe of the* Messiah.

I SUPPOSE it is ſufficiently evident, that the immediate poſterity of *Adam* could eaſily be aſſured of the manner how their parents had been produc'd, from whom they deriv'd their beings. They could likewiſe be fully ſatisfied about the truth of their ſin, and the promiſe God had made them, *That one of their poſterity ſhould deſtroy the enemy of mankind.*

My buſineſs therefore next, is to ſhew that they were actually aſſured of the truth of theſe matters: this will appear if we conſider two things.

The firſt is, that as theſe matters were the chief objects of their meditation, becauſe of their extraordinary importance, ſo it is evident that they acted as perſons fully ſatisfied of the truth of them.

The other is, That as they had been inſtructed in theſe truths by their parents, ſo they deliver'd the ſame to their poſterity, to whom they tranſmitted the belief of theſe matters, as of things altogether unqueſtionable.

I ſay then, that they acted as thoſe who were fully aſſured of the truth of theſe matters, which appears throughout the whole courſe of their lives, not only when they did that which was good, but when they were overtaken with ſin: and this alone, methinks, is ſufficient to evidence the deep impreſſion, the belief of the creation, and the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, had made on their hearts.

Sacrifices are acts of religious worſhip; and this cuſtom therefore of ſacrificing, which we find amongſt the Children of *Adam*, was an evident mark of their piety; and this their religious inclination was, without doubt,

doubt, the effect of their being perſwaded of the truth of the creation, and firſt promiſe.

The ſin of *Cain* in killing his brother, ſhews the ſame perſwaſion: the Divine oracle, *the ſeed of the woman, ſhall bruiſe the ſerpent's head*, being expreſs'd in very general terms, was applicable, either to the firſt ſon of *Eve*, or to his poſterity; or elſe, to ſome other who might be called her ſeed, becauſe born from one of her poſterity.

It is natural for us, to paſs from one meaning to another, when we are in ſearch for the true ſenſe of ſuch *general propoſitions* as theſe. Now it appears from the name which *Eve* gave to *Cain*, that ſhe took the words of this oracle in the firſt ſenſe, that is, ſhe looked upon *Cain* to be the ſon that had been promis'd her, as appears from her own words. *I have* (ſaith ſhe) *gotten a man from the Lord* (*k*). And it cannot be doubted, that being in this opinion her ſelf, ſhe was not wanting to cheriſh and flatter this hope in her ſon, that he was to fulfil the firſt prophecy or Divine oracle: neither is it any whit ſtranger to ſuppoſe this, than to imagine, that *Mandane* did inſtil into her ſon *Cyrus* aſpiring thoughts for the empire of *Aſia*, from the dream of his father *Aſtyages*, which ſhe look'd upon as a divine foreboding.

When we read therefore, that *Cain* ſlew his brother, ſeeing him preferr'd of God by a very diſtinguiſhing mark in the act of their ſacrificing, through the jealouſie and hatred he had conceived againſt him: may we not very naturally conclude from thence, that as he had never doubted of the truth of the promiſe, ſo he could not endure to ſee another come to diſpute his pretenſions of being the fulfiller of that firſt oracle.

A like reflexion we may make upon the name which *Eve* gave to *Seth*, and indeed, the *Jews* in their antient commentaries on *Geneſis*, lead us to it: *She called his name* Seth, *for God* (ſaid ſhe) *has appointed me another ſeed* (*l*). *R. Tanchuma* following the notion of *R. Samuel*, ſaith, That ſhe had regard to that ſeed which was to proceed from another, or a ſtrange place; and what ſeed is that? ſaith he, 'Tis the King, the *Meſſiah*.

I pretend not to maintain the ſolidity of the reflexions they make upon the words, *another ſeed*. They ſeem rather to have pleas'd themſelves in ſporting with a word which admits of both ſignifications, *other* and *ſtrange*, than to give us an exact and diſtinct notion of the importance of that word. Thus much at leaſt, we cannot deny, but that *Eve* conſidering her ſon *Seth*, as him whom God had given her inſtead of *Abel*, ſhe could do no leſs than acquaint him with her hopes; and indeed, this information was that which not only diſpoſed *Seth* and his poſterity for piety and the ſpirit of religion, but did alſo in a particular manner incline them to ſeparate from the race of *Cain*, as from thoſe whom God had bereft of the right of fulfilling the firſt oracle, to which naturally they might pretend.

It appears from the example of *Enoch*, that the children of *Adam* lived in the exerciſe of religious worſhip: and we know that the ſaid worſhip ſuppoſeth the creation of the world, and promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, and that all the acts of religion are employ'd either in commemorating theſe truths

(*k*) Gen. iv. 1.
(*l*) *Rabboth* fol. 27. col. 2. par. 23. *& alibi.*

every ſeventh day, or in unfolding the wonders therein contain'd, or in teſtifying our thankfulneſs to God for the ſame.

We may add here, that the inſtance of *Lamech*'s *polygamy* does in ſome ſort make out to us the force of this perſwaſion.

Cain being rejected by God, and diſtinguiſh'd by an exemplary puniſhment, for killing his brother *Abel*, it is evident, that no man could any longer interpret that promiſe in the firſt ſenſe, by applying it to *Adam*'s firſt ſon, or his poſterity. This being ſo plain, as none could be ignorant of it, it was therefore natural to ſeek for another meaning of that promiſe, and to place the fulfilling of it in a poſterity at a greater diſtance, or more numerous.

And indeed ſo it happen'd; for the exemplary puniſhment which God inflicted on *Cain* during the ſeven firſt generations, according to thoſe words, That *he ſhould be puniſhed ſevenfold*, made his poſterity apprehend, that God (for the ſin he had committed) had juſtly debarr'd him of the right he might otherwiſe have had of fulfilling the promiſe.

But yet at the ſame time they conceived alſo, that this right, which belong'd more properly to the eldeſt or firſt-born, than to the younger brothers, was now to return to his poſterity after the ſeventh generation. And in this view it ſeems, that *Lamech* affected polygamy, as if by multiplying his poſterity, he had hoped to ſee that promiſe fulfill'd by ſome one or other of them.

It cannot be deny'd, but that he imitated the crimes of *Cain*, and therefore may well be ſuppos'd to have been leven'd alſo with his falſe maxims. But how greatly ſoever he was corrupted, yet foraſmuch as he had been educated in the hopes of his father, and in converſe with the family of *Seth*, who many ages before had formed public aſſemblies for religious exerciſes, we can't well imagine, but that he muſt have had the ſame pretenſions.

It appears therefore, that the polygamy of *Lamech* may juſtly be eſteemed an effect of his miſapprehenſions concerning the ſence of the firſt promiſe; thoſe ſenſes which he conceived moſt likely, he made choiſe of, to give him a ſhare in the fulfilling of that promiſe, which pointed at a ſon to be born. So that the irregularity he was guilty of in marrying two wives at the ſame time, may paſs for a proof of his being perſwaded not only of the promiſe, *That the ſeed of the woman ſhould break the ſerpent's head*, but alſo of the creation of the world.

It ſeems, that according to theſe principles, we may give a very plauſible account, as well of thoſe violences which were exerciſed in the old world, and of their ſtrong inclinations to ſenſuality, as of thoſe alliances between the family of *Seth*, and that of *Cain*; which did not happen till ſeven generations after *Cain*; that is to ſay, at a time when the family of *Cain* pretended to be reſtored again to his antient right, from which he had been ſuſpended during ſeven generations: the family of *Seth* by theſe alliances with the family of *Cain*, ſeeming deſirous to ſecure their hopes and pretenſions. It will not be thought ſtrange, that I look upon the jealouſie of *Cain* towards his brother (as thinking himſelf ſupplanted by him of his right to accompliſh the promiſe) and the polygamy of *Lamech*, as an effect of this perſwaſion; if it be conſider'd, that in all likelyhood

this

this belief was more ſtrong at the beginning of the world, the idea of the promiſe being more freſh and lively in the minds of men, as a thing at no great diſtance from thoſe times: and that we find in the holy family in general, manifold inſtances of this ſpirit of jealouſie, and burning deſire of a poſterity.

We find alſo, much about the ſame time, another *Lamech*, the father of *Noah* (*m*), declaring by the name he gave his ſon, the hopes he had that he might probably be the perſon who was to comfort mankind concerning all the miſery ſin had brought into the world.

Thus it appears clearly, that for above ſixteen ages from the creation of the world to the deluge, we find in all the actions of the children of *Adam* a ſtrong impreſſion of the belief of the creation of the world, and the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*. And till this time we find not the leaſt inſtance which might ſeem to convince the relation of *Moſes* of the leaſt abſurdity. We ſee men acting from the perſwaſion of theſe two matters of fact; we muſt conclude therefore, that they were diſtinctly inform'd of them; yea, we ſee all men in general, acting according to this perſwaſion: it is evident therefore, they were known to all, and the weekly obſervance of the ſabbath day continually repreſenting thoſe truths to the eyes and minds of all, takes away all poſſibility of forgery in theſe matters.

Let us now enquire whether after the deluge theſe ideas were effaced; or, whether they have not exerted the ſame efficacy in the ſpirit of *Noah*, and the actions of all his poſterity.

CHAP. XII.

That NOAH *was fully perſwaded of the Creation of the World, and the Promiſe of the* MESSIAH.

IF we find that the children of *Adam*, and their poſterity, could be exactly informed of the creation and the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, and that indeed they were ſo, it will follow that *Noah* could not be unacquainted with the ſame truths.

Noah was ſix hundred years old when the deluge came: he had converſed with *Lamech* his father, who had ſeen *Adam* and his children, as being fifty ſix years of age when *Adam* died; he had converſed with *Methuſalem* his grandfather, who died that very year the flood came, and who being three hundred and forty three years old when *Adam* died, had without doubt inſtructed *Noah*, during ſo vaſt an interval of time, in like manner as himſelf had been inſtructed by *Adam* for many ages.

And as *Methuſalem* had lived a long time with *Seth*, who died in the year of the world 1042, ſo it is evident, that *Noah* who was born in the year

(*m*) Gen. v. 29.

year 1056, had not only ſeen *Lamech* and *Methuſalem*, but many alſo of their anceſtors, whoſe diſcourſes he heard, examin'd their traditions, and imitated their way of worſhip.

Moreover, *Noah* ſaw that there were no men in his time, who did not deduce their genealogy from *Adam*. All his contemporaries could convince him of it. Every one of them having as exact a knowledge of their anceſtors as he could have of his.

Now, that this was a matter which they might be eaſily aſſur'd of, appears on theſe two accounts: the one is the long life which the men of that age enjoyed; and the other, the ſhort interval of time which was between the creation and the deluge, the whole amounting only to 1656 years. *Adam* died in the year 930, and the deluge happened in the 600 year of *Noah*'s life. *Adam* died 126 years before the birth of *Noah*, ſo as *Adam* muſt have been ſeen and known by *Methuſalem*, *Lamech*, and thouſands of others who were contemporarys with *Noah*.

To theſe we may add a third remark, and that is the jealouſie and hatred which was between the two families of *Cain* and *Seth*: *Cain*'s poſterity were altogether corrupted, and the greateſt part of *Seth*'s alſo: *Noah* being of the poſterity of *Seth*, had no reaſon to call thoſe matters in queſtion, which he ſaw generally own'd and received of thoſe to whom their wickedneſs and crimes ſuggeſted objections againſt them. And I do not know, whether I might not ſuppoſe that *Noah* had before his eyes Paradiſe, with the cherubims who guarded the entrance thereof, and made it inacceſſible, which if ſo, was an authentick proof of the truths in queſtion: that garden, as far as we can judge, being not deſtroy'd, nor the guardian angel diſcharged till the time of the flood.

Be it as it will, yet *Noah* being a man fearing God, was honoured with an extraordinary call to exhort men to repentance, he was commanded to build an ark; he ſaw the deluge happening, according to what God had foretold, he ſaw the beaſts, of their own accord, gather themſelves together, to enter into the ark, in like manner as he had been told that they came to *Adam*. He ſaw the deluge ceaſe according to the Divine declaration, he ſaw fire from heaven conſuming the ſacrifice he offer'd in acknowledgment to God, in like manner, as the words of *Moſes* ſeem to imply, that it happened at the ſacrifice of *Abel*. He ſaw himſelf choſen in a peculiar manner, to be the depoſitary of the promiſe which *Adam* had left to his poſterity, tho' he never had the ſatisfaction of ſeeing it fulfilled himſelf, God having reſerved the accompliſhment of it for another time, and to one of his poſterity at a great diſtance.

It is very evident, that all theſe particulars could not but conduce to preſerve the memory of theſe firſt moſt important matters of fact of the creation and the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, and therefore, that *Noah* muſt of neceſſity be convinced of the certainty and truth of them. Let us now ſee whether *Noah*'s offſpring had the ſame perſwaſion concerning theſe things.

CHAP. XIII.

CHAP. XIII.

That the Children of Noah *were convinced of the Truth of theſe Matters.*

THE children of *Noah* were an hundred years old when the deluge happened, and conſequently had converſed a long ſpace of time with *Methuſalem*, and many other of their anceſtors and relations of the old world, and had frequented the religious aſſemblies, obſerved every ſabbath day in the family of *Seth*, whence they were deſcended; and had been inſtructed there by thoſe who had ſeen *Adam* and his poſterity; it is evident therefore, beyond all conteſt, that they could not be ignorant of the creation, and promiſe of the *Meſſiah*.

Now, that they had a diſtinct knowledge of thoſe matters, we may evidently conclude, not only becauſe they had ſeen God, when he bleſſed them, and a ſecond time ſaid to them, as after a new creation, *increaſe and multiply* (*n*): nor only upon the account of his giving them a poſitive law, forbidding them to eat the blood of living creatures (*o*), whoſe fleſh they were permitted to feed on, as he had forbid *Adam*, to eat of the fruit of the tree in the midſt of the garden, when he left the reſt to their free uſe: not only, for that he had given the rainbow, as a new ſign of his covenant with mankind; nor only becauſe they had practis'd thoſe acts of religion, to which they had been educated by their parents and anceſtors before the deluge: but becauſe the ſame may be inferred from that action which drew upon *Cham* his father's curſe.

What is the meaning of *Cham*'s deriding the nakedneſs of his father, and of his father's taking occaſion from thence to curſe him ſo ſolemnly, and that in the perſon of *Canaan* his firſt-born? If it were only a piece of irreverence in the father, what reaſon had *Noah* to curſe the ſon on that account? Or, was it (as ſome have ſuppos'd) that *Canaan* had given occaſion firſt to his fathers irreverence, by acquainting him with the diſorder in which he had found his grandfather *Noah*? Without doubt, there is ſomething more than ordinary in this hiſtory. Sure it is, that the account given us of *Cham*, repreſents him as a prophane perſon, and deeply tinctured with the maxims of *Cain* and his poſterity, and ſeems to hint to us, that he ſuppoſing the promiſe of the *Meſſiah* either fruſtrated by the death of *Abel*, or altogether falſe, he made his father's nakedneſs the ſubject of his mockery; who ſeem'd to be incapable of begetting any more children, and therefore incapable of contributing to the accompliſhment of the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, in hopes of which, he accounted himſelf ſo happy, that he had eſcaped the deluge.

What means it alſo, that *Noah* pronounceth ſo terrible a curſe, againſt the poſterity of *Cham* by *Canaan*, who were ſo far from giving an accompliſhment to that promiſe, that they were in a manner wholly extirminated by *Joſhuah*, when God put the poſterity of *Shem* by *Abraham* in poſſeſſion of the land of *Canaan*? It is very natural for us to conceive, that

(*n*) Gen. ix. 1. (*o*) Gen. ix. 5.

that *Noah* conſider'd his ſon *Cham*'s deriding of him, not only as contrary to the reſpect which was due to him as his father, but alſo as the effect of a horrid impiety, which attack'd God himſelf, as making that promiſe, *The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the ſerpent's head*, a ſubject of raillery.

This reflexion upon the action of *Cham*, and the curſe of *Noah* conſequent to it, does appear very natural, if we conſider that *Noah* could not but reflect upon the name his father had given him, and the ſpecial favour ſhewed to him, in being alone preſerved of all the poſterity of *Adam*, and conſequently, the onely perſon in the world, by whom this promiſe was to be fulfill'd. At leaſt, it can't be deny'd, but that this reflexion is as natural as it would have been juſt in reference to the fact of cruel *Aſtyages* (*p*), if when he had (as he thought) ſufficiently eluded his dream, which preſaged the glory of the ſon of *Mandane* his daughter, he had found her indecently uncovered and had taken thence occaſion, deridingly to reflect, with his other children, upon a dream which ſeem'd to promiſe to the ſon of *Mandane* the throne of all *Aſia*, and threaten the ruine of his own.

'Tis a thing worth our noting, that in the time of *Ezra* (*q*), the *Samaritans* had ſo freſh a memory of *Cham*'s ſin, which they ſuppoſed to be generally preſerv'd amongſt other nations, that in their letter to king *Artaxerxes* againſt the *Jews* who rebuilt *Jeruſalem*, they declare, they would not diſcover the king's nakedneſs; implying, that they could not conſent to the injury he might receive from the *Jews* in ſuffering *Jeruſalem* to be rebuilt. It is not needful to repeat thoſe other arguments which prove, that the children of *Noah* had reaſon to be, and were actually as much convinced of the creation and firſt promiſe, as their anceſtors were; for ſeeing that theſe arguments were the very ſame which their fathers had to perſwade themſelves of the truth of theſe things, we had better proceed to the enquiry, whether their poſterity that follow'd them, had the ſame perſwaſion they had? which may eaſily be proved, in making ſome reflexions on the following ages, and upon thoſe who deſcended from *Noah* and his children.

CHAP. XIV.

That the Poſterity of Noah's *Children were perſwaded of the Truth of the Creation, and firſt Promiſe.*

IF *Noah* ſaw *Methuſalem*, who had ſeen *Adam* and his poſterity before the deluge; *Abraham* ſaw *Shem* and his children, who were unqueſtionable witneſſes of what had paſſed before and ſince the flood.

Noah

(*p*) *Herod* lib. 1. *Juſtin Hiſt.* lib. 1. *Valer. Max.* lib. 1.
(*q*) *Ezra* iv. 14.

Noah dying 350 years after the deluge, it appears, that his death happened in the year of the world 2006; ſo that *Noah* died only two years before the birth of *Abraham*, he being born in the year 2008.

Abraham lived 150 years with *Shem*, who died in the year 2158, and 88 years with *Arphaxad* the ſon of *Shem*, who died in the year 2096, he lived 118 years with *Selah* ſon of *Arphaxad*, who died in the year 2126, and 179 years with *Heber* the ſon of *Selah*, who died in the year 2187.

Iſaac being born in the year 2108, might ſee *Shem*, *Selah*, and *Heber*, who for ſome hundreds of years had converſed with *Noah* and his other children; I ſay we may ſuppoſe him to have converſed with thoſe patriarchs, or at leaſt with thoſe who being their contemporaries, diſcourſed of *Noah* as a man but of yeſterday, and from his relation, and his children's, were informed of the creation of *Adam*, his fall, the promiſe of the holy ſeed, the death of *Abel*, the miracle of Paradiſe, the preaching of *Noah*, the deluge, *&c.* And who, in obedience to the law of God, obſerved by their anceſtors, did meet together fifty two times every year, to celebrate the memorial of theſe wonders, and to teach them to their poſterity.

We may take notice of three things here which conduce much to the preſervation of a diſtinct knowledge of theſe matters.

The firſt is, That the ark it ſelf might be ſeen by all the world, as a certain monument of the deluge, and the ſaving of *Noah* and his ſons (*r*). This monument continued very many ages after *Abraham*, and was a means to preſerve the memory of the deluge amongſt the *Pagans*, as *Lucian*, to name no more acquaints us.

The ſecond is, That it was as eaſie for any of *Abraham*'s contemporaries, as for *Abraham*, to deduce his genealogy from *Noah* and his children.

And this was the more eaſie, becauſe the firſt diviſion of the world amongſt the three ſons of *Noah*, was followed by another partition amongſt their poſterity, in the year of the world 1758, a diviſion which gave them a juſt title of poſſeſſion to that part of the earth, where they were ſeated, in defence of which, it ſeems probable, that the war of *Chedorlaomer* (mention'd the XIII of *Geneſis*) was undertaken, the family of *Cham* having invaded the land of *Canaan*, which was part of the inheritance of *Shem*, as we ſhall make appear elſewhere.

The third and laſt thing is, That it was not eaſie to impoſe a forgery upon thoſe times, becauſe their lives were yet of a great extent, tho' inferiour to thoſe who lived before the flood.

To theſe we may add this further conſideration, that as the jealouſie which was between the family of *Seth* and of *Cain*, was a great means to preſerve inviolably the important truths of the creation and firſt promiſe; a like jealouſie now being riſen amongſt the ſons of *Noah*, *Cham* being accurſed of his own father in the perſon of *Canaan*, and the ſame being propagated to their poſterity, it could not but effectually contribute to reſcue theſe important truths from oblivion, and particularly the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, conceived in theſe words, *The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the ſerpent's head*.

In

(*r*) *De Dea Syra*, p. 1060.

In a word, we may not only in reference to the matter in hand, take notice of what *Lucian* relates concerning the religion of the *Aſſyrians* (*s*), which did ſo lively preſerve the memory of the deluge, and of what was done to *Noah* by his ſon *Cham*, when he ſcoffed at the nakedneſs of his father (*t*); but alſo, that the god of the *Sichemites* was called *Baalberith*, whoſe ſymbol was the figure of the privy parts of a man, which ſeems a manifeſt alluſion to their deſcent from the family of *Cham*, the *Sichemites* being ſome of the poſterity of *Canaan*.

It is alſo very natural to conceive, firſt of all, that it was from thoſe old pretenſions that the *Canaanites* took occaſion to prophane the moſt holy things, with ſuch ſhameful idea's.

Secondly, That it was in deteſtation of theſe idea's, that God ordered the killing of the prieſts of *Baal*. And,

Thirdly, That it was for the ſame reaſon, that the *Jews* were commanded to deſtroy them utterly.

Fourthly, This was alſo the reaſon why the *Iſraelites* were ſo often deſirous of imitating their crimes.

In the fifth place, As we ſee that upon the like account the *Moabites* and *Ammonites* took *Chemoſh* for their god, and that the women of thoſe nations were very zealous to propagate their religion, of which we have an inſtance in *Jezabel* the wife of *Ahab*, ſo God was alſo willing to inſpire his people with horrour and deteſtation, for their religion or any alliance with them.

Laſtly, As there does appear a very great conformity and reſemblance, between the firſt birth of the world from the firſt chaos, and its being born again after the deluge; between *Adam* the firſt man, and *Noah* the ſecond, and between the jealouſies ſprung up in both their families upon the account of the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*: So this conformity could not but very naturally contribute, to preſerve the memory of thoſe ancient events which *Noah* and his children had delivered to their poſterity with all the care which is taken to preſerve the tradition of the fundamentals of religion.

CHAP. XV.

That we find the Family of Abraham *and his Poſterity till* Jacob *fully perſwaded of thoſe Truths.*

IT is no leſs eaſie to conceive how the diſtinct knowledge of theſe truths, was in proceſs of time handed down to *Jacob* and his poſterity. This I ſhall briefly explain.

I need

(*s*) Judg. viii. 23. & ix. 8. *Talm. Hier.* fol. 11. col. 4. & *gloſſ. in h. l.* & *Avodazara* c. iii. fol. 43. col. 1.

(*t*) *De Dea Syr.* p. 1069.

I need not take notice here, that the religion practis'd by *Abraham* and his poſterity ſuppoſe theſe matters as conſtantly owned and known.

It cannot be deny'd, but that *Lot* having followed *Terah* and *Abraham*, when God called the latter out of *Chaldea*, might thence ſuppoſe, that this heavenly call did ſeparate and diſtinguiſh him from the reſt of the poſterity of *Shem*, and gave him a right as well as *Abraham*, to pretend to the priviledge of fulfilling the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, or at leaſt to ſee it fulfill'd in his poſterity. This we may infer from the inceſt of *Lot*'s daughters; their crime, which in another view appears very monſtrous, doth clearly prove, that they were ſtrongly poſſeſs'd with this hope which their father had raiſed in them.

I know that ſome interpreters ſuppoſe (*u*), that they were moved to commit this inceſt from a pious intention of preſerving mankind, as imagining to themſelves, that as the deluge had drowned all men, beſides *Noah* and his family, ſo the flames which deſtroy'd *Sodom*, had conſumed all mankind; which they were the more ready to believe, becauſe they might have heard from their father, that the world one day was to periſh by fire. But indeed, it may be conſider'd as proceeding from a very different motive, the *Jewiſh* Doctors (*x*) plainly averring, that this was done by them in hopes of bringing forth the promiſed Redeemer.

And if we look upon this action of theirs in this view, with reference to the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, which was the grand object of the hopes of all thoſe that fear'd God; it is natural to conceive, that conſidering their father, as one whom God had peculiarly choſen from amongſt the poſterity of *Shem*, to execute the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, and ſeeing that their mother was changed into a ſtatue of ſalt, they conceived themſelves in ſome ſort authoriz'd to ſurprize their father in that manner; and the rather, becauſe they conceived on the one hand, that none of the *Canaanites* (upon whom God had now begun to pour forth ſo hideous a vengeance, as a beginning of the execution of the curſe againſt *Cham*) having any part in this chiefeſt of bleſſings, could ever marry them, after that God had ſo manifeſtly ſeparated and call'd forth their father from amongſt them; and on the other hand, ſuppoſing that God would diſpence with the irregularity of this action, by reaſon of their being reduced to an extremity.

There be three circumſtances which greatly confirm this my remark upon the motive of their inceſt.

The firſt is, That they are repreſented to us as thoſe who had behaved themſelves very chaſtly, in the midſt of the impurities of *Sodom*; and that beſides we find they deſign'd no ſuch thing, till after the death of their mother.

The other is, That we ſee them contriving the thing together, and that in a matter which naturally is apt to ſeparate the greateſt friends, where the motive proceeds from a ſpirit of uncleanneſs: nor indeed, do we find that they continued in this inceſt.

The third is, That they were ſo far from being aſham'd of an action, in it ſelf ſo criminal, or concealing the knowledge of it from poſterity, that they gave thoſe names to the children born of this their inceſt, that might

(*u*) *Lyra* in Geneſ. xix. (*x*) *Bereſ. Rab.* part 23.

might perpetuate and divulge the memory of this their action, the one calling her ſon *Moab*, as much as to ſay, *born of my father*, and the other hers *Benammi*; a name of a like ſignification with the former.

This obſervation is very neceſſary, becauſe theſe two ſons became the heads of two great people, the *Moabites*, and the *Ammonites*, whoſe kingdoms laſted above 1300 years, and lived on the borders of the holy land, and were jealous of *Abraham* and his poſterity, as pretending that *Abraham* could not be choſen before *Lot* their father, who being the ſon of *Abraham*'s elder brother, was to be conſider'd as the firſt-born of *Terah*, and who were apt, without doubt, to take it for granted, that if God had brought *Abraham* out of *Chaldea*, and reſcued him from *Ur*, he had in a more peculiar manner, ſaved *Lot* alone from the conflagration of *Sodom*, by the miniſtry of Angels, and that *Abraham* and *Lot* being equally deſcended from *Terah*, the right of accompliſhing the promiſe, did equally belong to them.

And indeed, we find that in all ſucceeding times, theſe thoughts did predominate with them, as may eaſily be made out from the hiſtory of *Balaam*.

We ſee therefore, that the *Moabites* who were deſcended from the eldeſt daughter of *Lot*, look'd upon the pretenſions of the *Iſraelites*, that the *Meſſiah* was to be born of their ſeed, in excluſion to all others, with great impatience, and it was for this reaſon, that they ſent for *Balaam*, to decide (by Divine authority) the difference between them, concerning the right or the promiſed bleſſing.

We may make very near the ſame reflexions upon the calling of *Ruth* the *Moabiteſs*, when ſhe ſaith to *Naomi* her mother-in-law, *Thy God ſhall be my God, and thy people ſhall be my people*; which ſignifies a renouncing of the pretenſions of her own people, and an acquieſcing in the juſtice of thoſe of the *Iſraelites*, and it was upon this occaſion, that *Ruth* is more particularly taken notice of in the genealogy of our Saviour, as I ſhall have occaſion to ſhew hereafter.

That which I have hinted concerning the intention and aim of the daughters of *Lot*, hath been obſerved before by the *Jewiſh* Rabbins, as we may ſee in the moſt ancient of their Commentaries upon theſe words of *Geneſis*, Chap. XIX. v. 32. *Come let us make our father drink wine*, &c, Upon which words, *R. Tanchumah* following the footſteps of *R. Samuel*, makes this reflexion, *That we may preſerve ſeed of our father*; it is not ſaid, that we may preſerve a ſon from our father, but that we may renew the poſterity of our father, *becauſe* (ſaith he) *they had regard to that ſeed, which was to proceed from a ſtrange place, and what ſeed is that? It is the King* Meſſiah.

After this obſervation upon this action of *Lot*'s daughters, it can no longer rationally be doubted, but that the violent paſſion which *Sarah* had for a ſon, proceeded from the very ſame impreſſion which made her contrary to the inclinations of that ſex, to deliver her ſervant into her huſband's boſom, eſpecially if we join to this the particular promiſe God had made to *Abraham*, which ſhe could not be ignorant of.

Sarah ſees her ſelf deſtitute of children, and her barrenneſs having continued ſo long a time, ſhe had no hopes of ever being a mother, what remain'd

remain'd therefore for her, but to think of adopting a ſon of her bond-woman? And in conſideration of this, ſhe perſwades her huſband, who had no inclination to any ſuch thing by any thing that appears (at leaſt precedent to this deſire of his wife) to take her unto him. *He ſought the ſeed of God*, that is, the ſeed which God had promiſed, as *Malachy* expreſſes it, *Mal.* II. 15.

At leaſt it is certain, that the *Jews* have taken theſe words of *Malachy* (*x*) in this ſenſe for a very long time, as they do ſtill to this day.

We may eaſily perceive, that this was a predominant impreſſion throughout that whole family, if to what we have already obſerv'd of *Lot*'s daughters and of *Sarah*, we do but add the ſorrow *Rebecca* conceived becauſe of her barrenneſs, and the contentions happening between the wives of *Jacob*, for their huſband's company, without which ſuppoſal, the relation of ſuch a matter, would be a thing of no importance.

Certainly, as it would be ridiculous to ſuppoſe, that ſo wiſe an hiſtorian as *Moſes* was, ſhould ſtoop to the recital of ſuch mean and low particulars (not to ſpeak worſe of them) without aiming at ſomething very high and conſiderable, ſo it is rational to believe, that in all theſe relations, he pointed at the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, which at that time was the great object of the religion of the faithful, which God in proceſs of time did explain by little and little more diſtinctly.

The jealouſie alſo which aroſe between *Iſhmael* and *Iſaac*, is no leſs conſiderable. *Iſhmael* was the eldeſt ſon of *Abraham*, and circumcis'd as well as *Iſaac*; he was ſaved from death by the miniſtry of an angel; and was the head of a great people, who from that time to this very day, have always been circumciſed.

It may be alſo of great uſe to take notice here, that *Iſhmael* could not but be inſtructed by *Abraham* concerning the promiſe God had made to him, to which he pretended, as being the elder, and therefore mocked at the great ſtir was made at the weaning of *Iſaac*, as thinking that he being the eldeſt, could not be deprived of the natural right of his primogeniture. At leaſt, it is very probable, that except it had been thus, *Sarah*'s anger (approved by God himſelf) would not have prov'd ſo violent, as well againſt *Iſhmael*, as *Hagar*, who flatter'd him in theſe pretenſions, nor would *Abraham* ſo far have comply'd with it.

And foraſmuch, as *Iſaac* on the other ſide, was born to fulfil a particular promiſe, was circumciſed, and ſaved from death by an angel; and that beſides all this, *Iſhmael* and he had been equally educated in the practice of religion, 'tis impoſſible, but that this conformity of events (which has been the cauſe of ſuch laſting conteſts between them and their poſterity) muſt have engaged them to inquire into the truth of the creation, and the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, and into all other matters which did any way concern them.

We have a like inſtance, if not ſtronger for our purpoſe, in *Eſau* and *Jacob*, who were both born of the ſame mother, but *Eſau* being the firſt-born, we find the ſame jealouſie ariſing between them, as before between

(*x*) *Targ. Jonath.* in h. l. & *Kimchi* in h. l.

tween *Iſhmael* and *Iſaac*. *Sarah* ſeem'd ſomewhat cruel in caſting out her adopted ſon *Iſhmael*, and here we ſee that *Rebecca* preferred *Jacob* before *Eſau* her firſt-born, and aſſiſted him in robbing his elder brother of the bleſſing due to him of right: but without queſtion, her deſign in all this was to entail this bleſſing on her family, by making it fall on *Jacob*, as being afraid (and that not without cauſe) that *Eſau* by his ſins and his marriage with the *Canaanites*, had made himſelf uncapable thereof.

Now as this was the occaſion of a great diſpute between theſe two Patriarchs educated in the ſame belief and religion, ſo it plainly ſhews us how ſtrong a perſwaſion they had of the creation, and the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*.

And beſides, it is further very remarkable.

Firſt, That *Moſes* repreſents *Eſau* as a prophane perſon, for which, not only this reaſon may be alledged, that he ſold his birth-right for a meſs of pottage, to which birth-right the prieſthood was always annexed, but we muſt further take notice.

That he being educated by his father in the hopes of this bleſſing, he ſeem'd to laugh at it in all his actions; for firſt he married the daughter of *Heth*, by which he ſufficiently intimated, that he neither minded the bleſſing nor the curſe of God; for *Canaan* and his poſterity had in a very ſolemn manner been curſed by *Noah*, with a particular regard to the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, as I hinted before.

In the ſecond place, he married a daughter of *Iſhmael*, as if he intended to renew the pretenſions of *Iſhmael* againſt *Iſaac* his father.

In the third place we ſee, that when he repented of this prophane humor, he was pierced with extream ſorrow for the crime he had committed, becauſe he could not obtain pardon for it.

This jealouſie and difference between *Eſau* and *Jacob*, is the more conſiderable, becauſe *Eſau* was the head of a great nation, *viz.* the *Edomites*, a people circumciſed as well as the *Jews*, jealous of the poſterity of *Jacob*, and living upon the borders of *Judea*, as well as the *Moabites*, *Ammonites*, and *Iſhmaelites*, but yet put by their hopes by that oracle, *The greater people ſhall ſerve the leſſer*.

Were it needful to afford a greater light to theſe reflexions, I might here add a very natural one, from the oath which *Abraham* made his ſervant *Eliezer* take, when he ſent him to *Padan Aram*, to procure a wife for *Iſaac*. We may eaſily judge, that he was not willing he ſhould marry a *Canaanite* as *Lot* had done; and that for fear of forfeiting his hopes, and weakening the juſt pretenſions of *Iſaac* to the right of accompliſhing the promiſe, from whence the *Canaanites* were excluded by the prophecy deliver'd by *Noah*. But that which made *Abraham* to oblige his ſervant to ſwear, putting his hand under his thigh; that is, touching that part which was the ſubject of circumciſion (*y*), and which bore the mark of the covenant, deſerves a further conſideration.

We find firſt of all, that the Patriarch *Jacob*, obſerves the ſame cuſtom, when he made his ſon *Joſeph* to take an oath, that he ſhould not bury him in *Egypt*.

Secondly, We find that this cuſtom of beholding that member which received

(*y*) St. *Jerom*.

received circumciſion, as a part conſecrated to religion, did by little and little take place in the land of *Canaan*, and gave occaſion to the worſhip of *Baal Peor*, ſo famous among the *Moabites* and *Ammonites*; a very ſurpriſing and ſtrange worſhip indeed, and yet celebrated with feſtivals, and hymns, and was the riſe of that worſhip which the heathens afterwards gave to *Priapus*. What I have here obſerved, hath been in part acknowledged by the *Jews*, where they ſpeak of the worſhip of *Baal Peor*, and the reaſon which made God preſcribe to the prieſt the uſe of linen drawers, that their nakedneſs might not appear during the functions of their miniſtry.

After all that I have now ſaid, concerning thoſe jealouſies which *Moſes* relates with ſo much care, it ſeems that the ſolidity of theſe obſervations cannot be diſputed. Eſpecially if we conſider, that it is theſe jealouſies, and theſe pretenſions to the promiſe of the *Meſſiah* that gave riſe to the cuſtom of calling God, the God of *Abraham*, the God of *Iſaac*, and the God of *Jacob:* for tho' he might as well have been called the God of *Adam*, the God of *Enoch*, and the God of *Noah*, foraſmuch as all theſe Patriarchs were alſo depoſitaries of the promiſe of the *Meſſiah:* yet it is probable that God was called ſo, becauſe of the particular promiſes which had been made firſt to *Abraham*, ſecondly to *Iſaac*, and laſtly to *Jacob*, and in oppoſition to the pretenſions of ſome people near neighbours to the *Iſraelites*, and jealous of their hopes: the God of *Abraham*, and not of *Lot*, as the *Ammonites* and *Moabites Lot*'s poſterity, pretended; the God of *Iſaac*, and not of *Iſhmael*, as the *Iſhmaelites* pretended; the God of *Jacob* and not of *Eſau*, as the *Edomites* who were the offspring of *Eſau* pretended.

CHAP. XVI.

That this very Perſwaſion ſeems to have been kept up amongſt the Poſterity of Jacob, *until* Moses's *time.*

IT is yet eaſier to ſhew, that the diſtinct knowledge of the creation, and of the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, did continue from *Jacob* to *Joſeph*, and ſo on to *Moſes*.

The following arguments will clearly demonſtrate it.

Firſt of all, we ſee that *Jacob* (z) being poſſeſs'd of the bleſſing, and ſo depoſitary of the promiſe, obey'd *Iſaac*'s command, who forbad him to take a wife, but out of his own family; and that accordingly he went to *Padan-Aram*, to ſeek and get a wife amongſt thoſe of his kindred, as *Abraham* had formerly ſent for one of the ſame countrey for his ſon *Iſaac*.

We ſee in the ſecond place, this Patriarch imitated *Lamech* (a) in ſome reſpect, by his falling into polygamy: for who can doubt but he, who was conſcious to himſelf of having ſurpriz'd, as he thought, the bleſſing

 deſign'd

(z) Geneſ. xxviii. (a) Geneſ. xxix.

deſign'd for his elder brother, did act in this occaſion by the ſame principle which *Lamech* had formerly acted by? Thus we ſee that barren *Rachel* follows *Sarah*'s example, and adopts the ſon of that maid-ſervant, whom ſhe gave to *Jacob*; wherein *Leah* follow'd her, and gave one of her maids to her huſband: all this was evidently grounded upon the ſame principle which afterwards bred thoſe diſſenſions betwixt *Jacob*'s wives about the getting children by him: for it is very natural to believe, that *Jacob* did not conceal from his wives his advantages and hopes.

It appears, that *Jacob*'s children which were born, for the moſt part in *Laban*'s houſe in *Chaldea*, where they had ſeen *Abraham*'s native countrey, and thoſe of their own kindred, from among whom God had commanded *Abraham* to depart, and to go into *Canaan*, did entertain very lively notions of thoſe important truths, eſpecially after they were ſtrengthened and confirm'd by the cares and inſtructions of old *Iſaac*, to whom they were brought by *Jacob*; and after they began to practice in *Canaan*, the worſhip and religion of their own family, and to compare it with the doctrine they had learnt in *Chaldea*.

Thoſe ſeveral voyages which God obliged the Patriarchs to undertake, as that of *Abraham* out of *Ur* of *Chaldea*; that of *Jacob* out of *Canaan* (we ought to make the ſame judgement of *Moſes*'s forty years ſojourning amongſt the *Midianites*) did evidently oblige them to examine more carefully, what was the tradition received in the ſeveral countries into which they travelled, and ſo to imprint the more deeply into their minds the belief of thoſe important truths, which were the foundation of their religion, and the ſole object of the meditations of the faithful.

One ſees in ſhort, the effects of theſe impreſſions.

1. By that cuſtom which ſeems to have begun in *Jacob*'s time, and which afterwards got the authority of a law, I mean the cuſtom of taking to wife ones own brother's widow to raiſe him up ſeed.

2. The ſin of *Onan* is repreſented ſo odious, only becauſe by it, he acted againſt the belief of the promiſe.

3. We ſee the ſame thing in the action of *Thamar*, *Juda*'s daughter-in-law; for having been deceived by *Judah*, ſhe in exchange, ſurpriz'd him into an inceſt, the commiſſion whereof, according to the obſervation of a Greek commentator (*b*), ſhe ſought to perpetuate, only becauſe ſhe had a vehement deſire to get children out of a family, which ſhe lookt upon as ſolely intruſted with the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, and out of which he was accordingly to be born.

It is neceſſary to make that obſervation, becauſe we ought always to remember, that ſhe was formerly a *Canaanite*, and that conſequently ſhe left off and renounc'd the impiety and idolatry of her kindred, when ſhe embrac'd the religion and hopes of *Jacob*'s family. Therefore we ſee that particular mention is made of her in our Saviour's genealogy, and of *Ruth* who likewiſe gave over all the pretenſions of her own people, and ſo forſook her religion to enter into the tribe of *Judah*, as well as of *Bathſhebah*, who was wife to a *Hittite*; whereupon an ancient father hath very well obſerved (*c*), according to the *Jewiſh* opinion, that *Shimei*'s revilings

(*b*) *Theoph.* in Mat. c. i.

(*c*) *S. Hieronym. in Tradit. Heb.* ad 1. Reg. 3.

revilings againſt *David*, when he went out of *Jeruſalem*, during *Abſalom*'s rebellion, reflected upon his birth out of the poſterity of *Ruth* the *Moabiteſs*, as the *Jews* even to this very day do underſtand it.

We may make the ſame reflexion upon the conſideration of that implacable jealouſie which *Joſeph*'s dreams raiſed in the minds of his brethren.

1. We may reaſonably conceive, that he being the firſt-born of *Rachel*, and the wife which *Jacob* his father had firſt made love to, he had been brought up with hopes of the birth-right, as well as *Iſaac*, who was but the ſecond ſon of *Abraham*.

But 2. He might beſides, very well ſuppoſe, that the crimes of his brethren born of *Leah* (whom in all likelihood he lookt upon as the ſole, legitimate heirs, the others being born of maid-ſervants) did rank them with *Eſau*, whom God had rejected. That outragious fury which *Joſeph*'s brethren ſhew'd againſt him, becauſe they lookt upon him as preferred of God by thoſe dreams to thoſe that were born before him, is ſo like that of *Cain*, of *Lot*, of *Iſmael*, and of *Eſau*; that it had, in all probability, the ſame cauſe and original.

Do we not ſee afterwards, another effect of the ſame jealouſie, in the affectation that *Jacob* and his family ſhew'd in the land of *Egypt*, when they refuſed to live promiſcuouſly with the *Egyptians*, which were the poſterity of *Ham*, and begg'd of them a countrey where they might live by themſelves; as we ſee on the contrary, the *Egyptians* ſhewing an extream averſion againſt *Jacob* and his family, which was of *Sem*'s poſterity.

Certainly it cannot be denied, that as this ſeparation was an effect of the antipathy of thoſe nations, ſo it might alſo be in ſome reſpect, the conſequence of *Jacob* and his childrens pretenſions upon the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, the execution and accompliſhment whereof, they ſtood up for as belonging to themſelves.

To all this we may add, that the perſecution of the *Egyptians* againſt the *Iſraelites* obliged them to make particular reflexions upon the promiſe which *Jacob* on his death-bed made to them from God: that perſecution was chiefly intended againſt the male children, *Pharaoh* commanding the extirpation of them, becauſe he was afraid of the *Jews* growing too ſtrong for him, and of their joyning with his enemies; and perhaps alſo, becauſe the *Jews* entertaining a certain expectation of the *Meſſiah*'s coming, and ſo boaſting and glorying of it upon all occaſions, the *Egyptians* deſign'd to fruſtrate, and cut off their hope thus, by hindering the accompliſhment of the promiſe.

However there was no real difficulty to keep up the diſtinct remembrance of thoſe important facts. *Jacob* died in the year of the world, 2315. *Joſeph* died in the year of the world, 2428. There are then but 58 years between *Joſeph*'s death, and *Moſes*'s birth: *Moſes* might have ſeen not only *Amram* his own father, who had ſeen *Levi*, but alſo *Kohath* his grandfather, who had ſeen *Jacob*.

And it is for that reaſon, that *Moſes* ſeems to have obſerv'd, that *Joſeph* ſaw his own children's children (*d*); that is to ſay, the third generation.

(*d*) Gen. l. 23.

One cannot imagine any circumſtances more conducible than theſe, to the preſerving the diſtinct knowledge of thoſe important truths which were the foundations of religion.

CHAP. XVII.

That the Tradition which gives us an account of the Perſwaſion which the Ancients had of the Truth of the Creation of the World, and of the Promiſe of the Messiah, *before* Moses *cannot be ſuſpected.*

I HAVE ſhew'd, I think, evidently enough, that both the Creation, and the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, with all the other things depending upon them, might have been known certainly by *Adam* and his children, and ſo afterwards be handed down to all his poſterity till *Moſes*'s time.

From *Adam* to *Noah* there is but one man, *viz. Methuſelah*, who joyned hands with both.

From *Noah* to *Abraham*, there is but one man, *viz. Sem*, who ſaw them both for a conſiderable time.

From *Abraham* to *Joſeph*, there is but one man, *viz. Iſaac*, *Joſeph*'s grandfather.

From *Joſeph* to *Moſes*, there is but one man, *viz. Amram*, who might have ſeen *Joſeph* long enough.

Thoſe characters of time which *Moſes* hath ſo carefully obſerved, do plainly evidence, that the creation, and the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, might be diſtinctly known: for if we ſuppoſe a continued ſucceſſion of *Adam*'s offspring, it was not eaſie to impoſe upon men in that matter; and that, becauſe every one of thoſe who were contemporaries with *Moſes*, being able to run up his own pedigree as far as the flood, nay, even up to *Adam*, by as compendious a way as *Moſes* could do his own; they would have treated thoſe with the utmoſt degree of ſcorn, who ſhould have attempted to forge any thing contrary to what was publickly and univerſally known; and ſo it was equally impoſſible, that the truth of things ſo important as the creation, and the promiſe of the *Meſſiah* were, ſhould be unknown.

Beſides, I think I have plainly ſhew'd, that many actions recorded by *Moſes*, tho' very ſtrange in themſelves, and which the Atheiſts look upon as abſurd and ridiculous, have proceeded from no other principle than from the ſtrong perſwaſion of the truth of thoſe facts, according as in a long ſeries of ages, every one of the ancients following his own humour and prejudices, framed to himſelf a particular idea differing from the true ſenſe of the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*.

It cannot reaſonably be objected, that all this is only grounded upon the uncertain authority of tradition: for tho' I grant that tradition, as to facts of another nature, be dubious and uncertain, and not to be too much

much relyed upon in matter of belief, yet this hath ſuch very particular characters as keep up its own authority.

Firſt, it ſuppoſeth a ſmall number of perſons from *Adam* to *Moſes*, who put it in writing.

Secondly, it ſuppoſeth, that thoſe who have preſerved this tradition, lived very long, and for the moſt part, for many centuries of years.

Thirdly, it relates to ſuch facts as every one is deſirous to be rightly inform'd of, and which he is particularly concern'd to examine, as relating to his own private intereſt, becauſe they are the principles of his actions, and the rules of his conduct both in civil and religious matters.

Fourthly, it ſuppoſeth ſuch real marks as ſerved to keep it up; ſuch as the pains of child-bearing, the paradiſe before the flood, the duration of the ark after the flood.

Fifthly, it ſuppoſeth a publick ſervice and worſhip, whoſe celebration is repeated fifty two times a year, that the remembrance of it ſhould be preſerved by all poſterity.

Sixthly, It was preſerved entire by paſſing from father to ſon, and we know that fathers or mothers do not naturally engage in a deſign of deceiving their children.

Seventhly, it ſuppoſeth ſtrange controverſies betwixt brothers, the elder having almoſt all been excluded, and the younger, as *Abel*, *Seth*, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, *Jacob*, *Juda*, choſen to accompliſh the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, which bred great jealouſies, and tended much to preſerve thoſe ideas of the truth.

Laſtly, it ſuppoſeth great conteſts betwixt whole nations, who all ſtrove one with another for the advantage of being the heirs of the promiſe, and depoſitaries of thoſe verities; as the *Moabites*, for inſtance, the *Ammonites*, the *Iſhmaelites*, the *Edomites*, and the *Jews*: each of them pretending to a preference before the others, by God himſelf, and ſo making it a matter of credit and honour to themſelves. All theſe characters contribute to the diſtinct preſervation of the knowledge of any truth.

CHAP. XVIII.

An Explication of MOSES's *Way of Writing; where it is ſhew'd, that in Writing the Book of* GENESIS, *he mentioned nothing but what was then generally known.*

THIS is a truth which at firſt I took for granted, and afterwards proved it, the reaſons whereof I explained particularly as I went on. But it ought to be fixed as ſolidly as the matter will bear, becauſe it often happens, that thoſe who do not foreſee the conſequences which may be drawn from the contrary opinion, do contradict it before they are aware of it; and that too under pretence of exalting the Divine

authority of the book of *Geneſis:* which gives occaſion to the Atheiſts to look upon it no otherwiſe than as learned men do, on the greateſt part of legends.

The prophetical ſpirit acts in two manners.

The Firſt is by way of revelation, in reſpect of thoſe things the prophet hath no knowledge of. Thus the *Evangeliſt* St. *John* hath foretold thoſe events, which we read of in the *Revelations:* for thoſe events being all hidden under the ſhadows of futurity, it was impoſſible for him to have foretold them, unleſs the ſpirit of God had immediately revealed them to him.

The ſecond is by way of direction, in reſpect of thoſe things with which the Prophet was himſelf acquainted, either becauſe he was an eye-witneſs of them himſelf, or becauſe he learnt them from thoſe who were ſo.

Now this direction of the ſpirit conſiſts in the guiding the Prophets ſo as that he may write of his ſubject, juſt as it was either ſpoken or done. Thus the Evangeliſts St. *Matthew*, and St. *John*, drew up an abridgment of thoſe ſermons of our Saviour, which they had heard, and of thoſe miracles which they had ſeen.

And thus St. *Luke*, and St. *Mark*, have written of thoſe things which they had heard from thoſe that were eye-witneſſes of them, as St. *Luke* particularly tells us.

Now I affirm, that when *Moſes* wrote the book of *Geneſis*, he had only the ſecond ſort of prophetical influences, and not the firſt; although in our diſputes againſt Atheiſts, to convince them by arguments from matters of fact, we may conſider him only as an hiſtorian, who might have written his book without any other particular direction, and might have preſerved in it the memory of thoſe ancient events which were then generally known.

Now what ſide ſoever divines may take in their diſputes againſt the Atheiſts, I may eaſily eſtabliſh my aſſertion: firſt, becauſe it is not neceſſary to ſuppoſe an entire revelation, where tradition being diſtinct enough, is ſufficient to preſerve a clear remembrance of all thoſe facts.

Now it cannot be denied, but that the tradition concerning the creation and the promiſe of the Meſſiah was of this nature, eſpecially if we conſider the little extent of it, and the immediate ſucceſſion of *Moſes*'s anceſtors, down to himſelf.

Secondly, if *Abraham*'s and *Jacob*'s travels through ſo many places, were, as I have obſerved already, very uſeful to give them a further view of the common belief of all the ſeveral nations deſcended from *Noah*, and of their agreement in this tradition, it were unjuſt to ſuppoſe that *Moſes*'s forty years ſojourning in the country of *Midian*, and that too when he was forty years old, and conſequently had that ripeneſs of age and judgment as is fitteſt for ſuch obſervations, did not ſerve to acquaint him with the ſeveral paſſages he records of *Abraham*, as well as of the ſeveral diviſions of his poſterity.

Thirdly, we may obſerve in the book of *Geneſis* a way of writing very different from that which we ſee in the greateſt part of *Exodus*, and in the following books; for whereas God ſpeaks to him in thoſe latter books, which he always did *vivâ voce*, (And the *Jews* have wiſely obſerved,

ſerved, that herein conſiſted *Moſes*'s advantage above the other Prophets to whom God was uſed to ſpeak only in dreams and viſions.) He uſes commonly thoſe words, *And the Lord ſpake unto me.* He marks out the place where God ſpoke to him, as well as the time and occaſion of God's ſpeaking to him, which he do's not in his book of *Geneſis*.

Fourthly, the book of *Geneſis* is not divided into ſeveral revelations, as all prophecies are, wherein the ſeveral returns of the holy Spirit of God are all exactly ſet down; which was abſolutely neceſſary, not only to eaſe the reader, who might be tired, if he was to carry a long ſeries of predictions in his mind at once, as if it were only one ſingle viſion or revelation; but alſo to condeſcend to the nature of the minds of men: for according to the rules of probability, we cannot ſuppoſe them to be filled with ſo many differing idea's at the ſame time, but a great confuſion muſt neceſſarily follow.

But ſuppoſing that theſe obſervations ſhould be thought inſufficient, yet thoſe that follow will ſeem capable of convincing the minds of all. There are in the book of *Geneſis* certain characters of its being written in that way which I ſpeak of. Firſt, one needs only juſt look into that book, and he will ſee that the ancienteſt facts, which are thoſe of which we moſt deſire a particular account, are there deſcribed in a very ſhort and conciſe manner. The hiſtory of 1656 years is all contained in eight chapters; there are no actions deſcribed therein with more circumſtances, than only ſome few of the moſt important, the remembrance whereof was ſtill freſh amongſt them. The hiſtory of *Lamech*'s polygamy, and the murders of which he was guilty, is there ſet down ſo compendiouſly, that it is very obſcure.

Secondly, one ſees that he ſpeaks more copiouſly of all that had been tranſacted near his time: he explains and mentions all the particulars and circumſtances thereof. He ſpeaks ſo ſhortly of *Melchiſedeck*, that it is doubted to this day, whether he was not the Patriarch *Sem*, or ſome other faithful worſhipper of the true God ſettled in the land of *Canaan*; whereas he ſets down at length all the particulars of the hiſtory of *Abraham*, of *Iſaac*, and of *Jacob*, whoſe laſt oracles which he ſpoke on his death-bed, he carefully records.

Thirdly, he deſcribes with the ſame exactneſs all the genealogies of the *Edomites*, their ſeveral tribes, and the names of their heads and captains, *&c.* As when he ſpeaks of thoſe of the people of *Iſrael*, which indeed he could eaſily do, having liv'd forty years of his life amongſt thoſe nations, as well as he had other forty years amongſt the *Iſraelites*.

Thoſe who maintain the contrary opinion, muſt of neceſſity ſuppoſe, firſt, That tradition is of no uſe at all to preſerve the idea of any illuſtrious action.

Secondly, That in *Moſes*'s time there were none who knew any particulars of the hiſtory of the flood, *&c.* of the tower of *Babel*, of the diviſion of tongues; tho' we ſee plainly, both by the nature of the facts themſelves, in which all nations were concern'd, and by *Moſes* his deſcription, that the generality of mankind were ſufficiently inſtructed in them already.

Thirdly, It muſt be ſuppoſed that *Moſes* hath ſet down the manner how

how that tradition was infallibly preſerved ſo carefully to no purpoſe, tho' he took notice of all the circumſtances neceſſary for that effect.

Fourthly, They muſt ſuppoſe that *Moſes*, whilſt he ſojourned in the land of *Midian*, heard nothing either of their original and pedigree, nor yet of the other neighbouring nations who were deſcended from *Abraham*, altho' all theſe nations valued themſelves upon their being deſcended from that Patriarch, and kept up their ſeveral pedigrees, by which they could trace their original with the ſame care as the *Iſraelites* did theirs, becauſe they had the ſame pretenſions that the *Iſraelites* had.

Laſtly, We muſt abſolutely take away the authority of the oracles recorded by *Moſes* in *Geneſis*. Theſe oracles promiſe to *Abraham* the poſſeſſion of the land of *Canaan* for his poſterity, and threaten the *Canaanites* with ſeveral curſes: *Jacob* by his will bequeathed *Sichem* to the tribe of *Joſeph*. He expreſly marks out the country which one of the tribes was to poſſeſs; he gives a deſcription of the character and rank of every tribe. The accompliſhment of thoſe oracles, tho' never ſo exact and admirable, is of no manner of conſequence, if we ſuppoſe that theſe particular predictions were abſolutely unknown in *Abraham*'s family, whereas their accompliſhment, which he carefully deſcribes from time to time, is the moſt ſolid demonſtration which can be deſired, to eſtabliſh the divinity of thoſe revelations, as well as of *Moſes* his other books.

CHAP. XIX.

An Anſwer to an Objection which may be drawn from the Hiſtories of the Egyptians *and* Chaldeans, *concerning the Antiquity of the World.*

WHAT I have already repreſented is ſufficient to prove that *Moſes* writ nothing in the book of *Geneſis*, but what was then generally known by all the world. And I know nothing that can be objected with any probability, but what we read in the moſt ancient authors concerning the *Egyptian* and *Chaldean* hiſtory, and in the modern ones concerning that of *China*. We muſt then examin both the one and the other with attention, that we may leave no difficulties in ſo important a ſubject.

All that the Atheiſts can object againſt the hiſtory of *Moſes*, concerning the *Epocha* of the creation of the world as he hath fixed it, is what *Diodorus Siculus* relates, that in the time of *Alexander* the Great, there were ſome *Egyptians* that reckon'd up three and twenty thouſand years from the reign of the ſun to *Alexander*'s time, and that thoſe who reckon'd leaſt, yet reckon'd ſomewhat more than ten thouſand years, which account exceeds the antiquity which *Moſes* aſcribes to the world in the book of *Geneſis*, by many ages, where he repreſents the creation as a fact which happened ſome few years more than two thouſand five hundred before

before he wrote that book. How then did *Moſes* write of things univerſally acknowledged by all the world? And they may here further aggravate, what the ſame *Diodorus* hath obſerved, that the hiſtory of the *Egyptians* was not written like that of the *Greeks*; amongſt whom, thoſe who came firſt wrote their own hiſtories, every man according to his own private humour, which cauſed that great variety amongſt their hiſtorians: whereas amongſt the *Egyptians* none wrote but by publick authority; the prieſts alone having that particular employment reſerved for them to write their hiſtories in their ſeveral generations.

This objection is eaſily confuted in two words: in ſhort, How could the *Egyptians* have always had men to write their hiſtories by publick authority in all their ſucceeding generations, ſeeing there were, as *Diodorus* obſerves, ſuch a ſtrange and vaſt diviſions amongſt themſelves? If there were but two or three ages difference more or leſs, no body would look upon it, as a material exception againſt the hiſtory of ſuch a long ſeries of time; but who can imagine that thoſe men who differ no leſs than thirteen thouſand years in their accounts of the duration of the ſame interval of time, had yet certain hiſtories upon which theſe things were grounded.

This ſhews ſufficiently, that as *Varro* the greateſt ſcholar the *Romans* ever had, hath divided antiquity into fabulous and hiſtorical, which he begins from the firſt *Olympiad*, leaving all which went before to the fabulous part; ſo we muſt of neceſſity make the ſame diſtinction in the matter of the antiquities of *Egypt*.

But I intend to do ſomething more, and to conſider this *Egyptian* hiſtory with a little more attention; out of which, I think, I may draw good arguments to confute the vanity of thoſe paſſages in it oppoſed to *Moſes*, and to confirm the authority of his book of *Geneſis*, and the truth of the chiefeſt tranſactions recorded in it.

I ſhall not at preſent take notice, that altho' the *Egyptians*, about their latter times, have maintain'd that the elements were eternal, yet they have ſufficiently acknowledged that the world had a beginning, ſeeing they make no mention of any thing before their thirty Dynaſties, which in all, did at the moſt amount to no more then 36525 years.

Neither do I think neceſſary to mention here that they have ſufficiently acknowledged the beginning of mankind, ſeeing they held that men were firſt born in *Egypt*; altho' they endeavoured to make good their pretenſions by that ſottiſh aſſertion of the eaſie production of frogs out of the mud of their fen's, as the ſame *Diodorus* tells us.

But there are three things which I muſt here take notice of, becauſe they do moſt certainly decide the queſtion.

The firſt is, That by that long reign which they aſcribe to their gods and hero's, there is nothing elſe meant but the motion of the ſtars, and nothing like a real kingdom. That prodigious number of years does not relate to the duration of the world, as if it had ſubſiſted ſo long; but to the return of the ſun, and the moon, and the five other planets, and of the heavens, to the ſame point from whence, according to the opinion of the *Egyptians*, they firſt began their courſe: In a word, it is only the great aſtronomical year, about which, as *Ariſtotle* tells us, the ancients have had ſo many different opinions, and the *Egyptians* have ſo little

little agreed, as the hiſtory of their antiquities, related by *Diodorus*, plainly ſhews. One thing evidently proves what I here alledge, which is, that they have reckon'd up but fifteen Dynaſties to *Jupiter* the laſt of the heroes, that is to ſay, but fifteen perſons to *Jupiter*, who is *Ham* the third ſon of *Noah*.

This comes very near *Moſes*'s calculation, who reckoneth *Noah* as the tenth man from *Adam*: for it is very likely, that thoſe ignorant people, after a long proceſs of time, have joyned *Cain* and *Abel* with *Sem* and *Japhet*, and *Miſraim* the ſon of *Ham*, which makes up the ſixteen Dynaſties, except we chuſe to ſay that the *Egyptians* thought fit to joyn the ſeven generations of *Cain* to thoſe before the flood, which comes very near to the ſame account. All this, according to the phantaſtick notions of thoſe ancient people, who deified the firſt men, and gave them afterwards the names of ſome ſtars, to impreſs upon their poſterity a greater veneration for them; and in particular, according to the groundleſs imagination of the *Egyptians*, who were reſolved to maintain that the firſt men were formed in their own country. And in ſhort, we find that thoſe Dynaſties for the moſt part, if we except thoſe of *Vulcan*, and of the ſun, have been but of a very ſhort continuance, and even ſhorter than that which *Moſes* aſcribes to the lives of the ancient Patriarchs, which we have already ſet down.

The ſecond thing that is obſervable in the confutation of this falſe antiquity, if one would take what the *Egyptians* have related of their Dynaſties before *Menes*, and *Jupiter* the laſt of their heroes in a hiſtorical ſenſe, is, that there are ſtill ſufficient marks of the newneſs of the world, as *Moſes* hath deſcribed it, in the remaining fragments of the true *Egyptian* hiſtory.

Firſt, We ſee that *Egypt* hath conſtantly carried the name of *Ham* amongſt the *Gentiles*, as well as in the holy Scriptures. It was called ſo in *Plutarch*'s time: the *Egyptian Thebes* was called *Hammon No Ezech.* 30. which is the name of the *Egyptian Jupiter*, as the heathen authors *Herodotus* and *Plutarch* teſtifie. Now it is viſible, that all this was for no other reaſon, but becauſe *Egypt* had fallen to the ſhare of *Ham*, *Noah*'s third ſon, who ſettled there, and whoſe poſterity did afterwards people *Africa*, and gave it their ſeveral names, as *Moſes* particularly obſerves.

Secondly, One ſees that *Egypt* hath more particularly born the name of *Mizraim*, which it bares ſtill, and which was given to it, in reſpect of one of its parts, becauſe of *Mizraim* the ſon of *Ham*. And it would be ridiculous for one to imagine that thoſe characters given by *Moſes*, had been allowed of in the world, except he had had good grounds to deſcribe their original in the ſame manner as he hath already done.

Thirdly, One ſee's that all the Dynaſties of *Egypt*, that is to ſay, all the ſeveral branches of the kings who have reign'd over the ſeveral parts of *Egypt*, did all acknowledge *Menes* for their common founder.

This *Menes* being the ſame with that *Mizraim* of *Moſes*, as I ſhall ſhew hereafter; it is viſible that the *Egyptians*, who in all likelyhood have aſcribed to *Menes* what they might more juſtly have aſcribed to *Jupiter Hammon*, becauſe they would diſtinguiſh their kings from hero's, have exactly followed the idea's of *Moſes*, in repreſenting one as the common

mon father of all the ſeveral branches of kings who divided *Egypt* amongſt themſelves.

Fourthly, One ſee's that the invention of the arts moſt neceſſary to human life, have been attributed either to *Menes* the firſt king of *Egypt*, or to his ſucceſſors. It was this *Menes*, or one of his ſucceſſors, who invented laws, letters, aſtronomy, muſick, wreſtling, phyſick, hieroglyphicks, anatomy, and architecture. All this plainly ſhews that the *Egyptians* had been miſtaken, if they had aſcribed to the world as great an antiquity as one would think they did, by the vaſt extent of time which they aſcribed to the Dynaſties of their gods and hero's. How could the world have continued above thirty thouſand years without thoſe arts which are ſo neceſſary for the convenience of human life? How could men not have found out, during ſuch a prodigious ſucceſſion of ages, thoſe arts, the invention whereof the *Egyptians* do aſcribe to their firſt king, or to one or two of his ſucceſſors, during a very ſhort interval of time.

Fifthly, One ſee's in the hiſtory of *Egypt* the ſame decay in religion that *Moſes* ſpeaks of (*e*). The ancients unanimouſly agree that the *Egyptians* had at firſt neither ſtatues nor images in their temples, which perfectly agrees with what *Moſes* tells us of the times after the flood; but they tell us alſo, That the *Egyptians* afterwards made ſome ſtatues, and conſecrated in their temples the figures of great numbers of animals. Some are of opinion, and that probably enough, that this came from the belief which they entertained afterwards of the tranſmigration of ſouls into other animals, an opinion which they thought did neceſſarily flow from the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul.

Sixthly, However, one ſees in the ſixth place, That as *Moſes* repreſents *Nimrod* one of *Ham*'s poſterity, as the founder of an empire in *Aſſyria*, where he formed the manners of the inhabitants according to the platform of the *Egyptian* principles; ſo the ancients have obſerved, that the famous *Aſſyrian Belus* came out of *Egypt*; and it is natural to conceive, that there he planted idolatry, which began even before *Abraham*'s time (*f*); if it be true as the *Jews* obſerve, that the tower of *Babel* was a temple wherein an idol was conſecrated to worſhip him. At leaſt, that conjecture hath a very ſolid ground, if we conſider the idolatry of the *Babylonians* towards this *Bel*, whom they worſhipped as a God, according to the Pagans cuſtom of adoring the founders of kingdoms after their deceaſe as Gods.

The third thing we are here to take notice of contains a demonſtration of the truth of the book *Geneſis*, if that which is recorded in it concerning the time of the flood, be compared with the Dynaſties of the *Egyptian* kings. I will not ſay that thoſe *Egyptians*, who had any knowledge of the flood, did exactly mark out the time of it, as *Moſes* doth. But I believe I may be able to ſhew out of their common opinion's, ſomthing very near equivalent.

They are all agreed that *Menes* was the firſt king of *Egypt*, and lived about fourteen hundred years before the famous *Seſoſtris*, as *Herodotus* and *Diodorus Siculus* do both relate it: now, who ſhould this king of *Egypt*

(*e*) *Herod* lib. ii. cap. 4. *Lucian* de Dea Syr.
(*f*) *Pauſan.* in *Meſſen.* p. 261.

Egypt be, whom ſome call *Seſonchoſis*, unleſs he is the ſame with *Shiſhak* whom the Scripture ſpeaks of in the hiſtory of *Rehoboam* (*g*), even the ſame famous conqueror who took *Jeruſalem* in the fifth year of *Rehoboam*'s reign. If one calculates the time from the flood, to the fifth year of *Rehoboam*, he will find that this *Menes* the firſt king of *Egypt*, is no other than the *Ham* of *Moſes*; and on the other ſide, that there is very little difference in reſpect of that interval of time betwixt the chronology of the *Egyptians* and that of the Scriptures? Thus the *Egyptian* account confirms *Moſes*'s narrative, and the authority of the holy writers, who are very particular in ſtating the times of every thing: whereas the *Egyptians* taking all in great, could never arrive at that exactneſs.

This obſervation is of very great uſe, to ſhew the certainty of *Moſes*'s chronology according to the *Hebrew* text: for that of the *Septuagint*, reckons up above two thouſand years, from the flood to *Seſoſtris*, whereas the *Egyptians* did reckon up but a little above fourteen hundred years from *Menes* the firſt king of *Egypt* to *Seſoſtris*.

There is yet leſs difficulty to anſwer the objection, which may be made againſt the book of *Geneſis* from the pretended antiquity of the *Chaldeans*. The ſame *Diodorus Siculus* (*h*), who ſaith, that the *Egyptians* propoſed ſo great an antiquity of the world, tells us alſo, that the *Chaldeans* believed it eternal, and that they boaſted in *Alexander*'s time, that they had learnt aſtronomy by tradition from their anceſtors, who had all ſucceſſively made it their ſtudy for four hundred ſeventy two thouſand years together. But there is nothing vainer than theſe pretences.

I ſhall not ſtand to ſhew here the folly of their opinions about the eternity of the world: if *Ariſtotle* ſeems to have authoriz'd it, yet it is enough to confute that opinion, to conſider, that it is repugnant to the common notion of all the nations of the world: ſo that *Democritus* himſelf, who pretended that the world was made by chance, yet durſt not oppoſe the common and general opinion of the worlds being new, tho' he had the boldneſs to reject the author of it, and that action by which it was created.

Neither do I intend to be prolix here in confuting the ſuppoſition of the *Chaldeans*, about their anceſtors following the ſtudy of aſtrology for 472000 year ſucceſſively: the impoſſibility of the thing in it ſelf is apparent by the certainty of the flood, which was acknowledged by all thoſe nations, of whom we have any antiquities, tho' never ſo little conſiderable in *Pagan* authors.

But I ſhall make two obſervations, whereof one ſhews the folly of the *Chaldean* hypotheſis, and the other doth invincibly eſtabliſh the authority of the book of *Geneſis*, if it be compared with what we know for certain, and in the *Chaldean* hiſtory.

The firſt is, That the moſt ancient authors are of opinion, that the *Chaldeans* are deſcended from the *Egyptians*, who lookt upon them as a colony of their own. *Diodorus Siculus* ſaith, that the *Egyptians* maintained, that they had ſent out ſeveral colonies into ſeveral parts of the world; that *Belus* the ſon of *Neptune* and *Lybia* had conducted one into *Babylon*, and that having fixed it near *Euphrates*, he eſtabliſh'd ſome prieſts among them

(*g*) I. Kings xiv. 26.
(*h*) *Diodor.* l. 2. ſect. 30, 31.

them according to the *Egyptian* cuſtom, who were free from all publick charges and offices, whom the *Babylonians* do call *Chaldeans*, and who according to the example of the *Egyptian* prieſts, philoſophers, and aſtrologers, did apply themſelves to the obſervation of the ſtars. *Heſtiæus*, and *Pauſanias*, ſay the ſame with *Diodorus* (*i*).

Now one needs only examine here, what the *Egyptians* do ſay about the invention of *aſtrology*, which they aſcribe to *Menes*, that is to ſay, to *Ham*, or to *Mizraim*, who lived after the flood, thereby to diſcover the fooliſh vanity of the *Chaldeans*.

It is plain, that the *Chaldeans* grew ſo vain, by the growth of ſo conſiderable an empire as theirs was, that they would be no longer beholding to the *Egyptian* aſtrologers, whom all other nations have lookt upon as the firſt inventors of that ſcience, to the inventing and perfecting of which, all men know that the *Egyptian* climate, where the ſkie is always free from clouds, did very much contribute.

And it is very conſiderable, that both the *Chaldeans* and the *Egyptians* began their year with the ſame month, according to *Cenſorinus*'s obſervation, c. XXI. *de die Nat.*

I know very well, the ancient heathens were miſtaken when they pretended that the *Chaldeans* went out of *Egypt*, as a plantation: there is, no doubt, a kind of illuſion in this their opinion; but yet the ground and origine of it is uncontroulable, becauſe the *Chaldeans* are deſcended from *Cuſh*, *Ham*'s eldeſt ſon, as *Moſes* tells, *Gen.* X. Therefore tho' we ſhould grant, that the *Chaldeans* were the firſt inventors of aſtrology, yet this would be always certain, that it was found out only ſince *Ham*'s time, whom the *Egyptians* did look upon as the laſt of their heroes, or as the firſt of their kings.

The other obſervation which ought to be well minded here, is taken out of the true and genuine *Chaldean* antiquities. One may prove by the aſtronomical demonſtrations of the *Chaldeans*, which the people of *Iſrael* was altogether unacquainted with, that *Moſes* followed a calculation which was then generally known.

Ariſtotle the firſt *Grecian*, that ever taught the eternity of the world, contrary to *Moſes*'s hiſtory, is the man who furniſhes us with it. He took care to ſend over into *Greece* the aſtronomical obſervations of the *Chaldeans* (*i*), by which it appeared, that *Babylon* was taken by *Alexander* about 1903 years after its foundation. Now that calculation agrees exactly with that of *Moſes*, who gives us the deſcription of the tower of *Babel* (*k*), and explains the original of the name of that city, which was built ſome ages after, by the confuſion of tongues which then happened. And truly, it would be very admirable, that the heavens in their motions ſhould have entered into a confederacy with *Moſes*, to juſtifie a chronology invented by him in ſport, without keeping to any rules, but writing by chance, and without any certain principle.

(*i*) *Ap. Joſeph. Antiq.* l. 1. c. 5. *Pauſan. Meſſen.* p. 261.
(*k*) *Simplic.* in l. 2. *de cælo.* (*l*) Gen. xi.

CHAP. XX.

CHAP. XX.

An Anſwer to the Objection which may be drawn out of the Hiſtory of China, *againſt the Moſaick Hypotheſis, concerning the Newneſs of the World.*

I COME now to the other Objection which may be made againſt *Moſes*'s calculation, according to the *Hebrew* text, as we have it now. It is drawn from the Hiſtory of *China*, whoſe uninterrupted ſeries runs up the ſucceſſion of their emperors to *Fohius* who reign'd about four hundred years before the flood. Some learned men have already made uſe of that argument, to diſcredit the Moſaick chronology according to the *Hebrew* text, and to cry up the calculation of the Septuagint, which exceeds that of the *Hebrew* text, in the hiſtory before the flood, by 800 years, and above 700 in the hiſtory from the flood to *Moſes*. This objection appears very ſtrong to thoſe who read in the hiſtory of *Martinius*, that there is not the leaſt interruption in the catalogue of the kings of *China* from *Fohius*; that the hiſtory of their actions is ſo certain, having always been written by a publick authority, that no man can reaſonably entertain any doubt about it: and the miſſionaries in *China*, have thought that there was no other way to reconcile the Moſaick chronology, with the *Chineſe*; but in making uſe of the Septuagint's account; and wherein they agree with all the Aſiatick Chriſtians, and even thoſe in *Europe*, who follow the *Septuagint* in their reckoning up the years of the world, for the moſt part: though St. *Hierome*'s tranſlation, which follows the *Hebrew* text exactly, is received in the weſt.

But after all, there is little difficulty in anſwering this objection, and we may hereupon eaſily ſatisfie, thoſe who do not diſpute only for diſputing ſake, but are ready to examine this queſtion, with that equity which is requiſite in the examination of all queſtions of that nature.

I confeſs ingeniouſly, that this hiſtory, which is one of the moſt ancient in the world, hath many illuſtrious characters of certainty, eſpecially if we give credit to all that *Martinius* relates of it.

Firſt, it marks out exactly the ſeries and ſucceſſion of all the kings of *China*, from the very beginning and original of that nation.

Secondly, it records in what year of each cycle of threeſcore years, every king began his reign and did ſuch or ſuch an action.

Thirdly, it relates ſome aſtronomical obſervations, older than any that have been made by the moſt ancient aſtronomers in other nations.

Fourthly, it was written by a publick authority, and by ſuch authors as lived in the time when the things which they record, were tranſacted; the immediate ſucceſſor to the empire taking always care, that the hiſtory of his predeceſſor ſhould be written.

Nay, to all this we muſt add, that the *Chineſe*'s way of writing, making no uſe of letters, but of hieroglyphicks, may have prevented theſe alterations which might otherwiſe have been made in their hiſtory; the whole

whole life of a man being hardly ſufficient, to attain to the perfect knowledge, of a tongue which hath above threeſcore thouſand figures which muſt be all learnt before a man can be able only to read and write.

But, beſides that, all this depends upon the ſole authority of *Martinius*, no body elſe beſide him having given us, as yet any opportunities of examining thoſe ancient monuments of *China*; we may find out of this very hiſtory ſome ſtrong proofs, to confirm that of *Moſes*, and ſo eaſily reſolve the difficulties which may be raiſed out of it, againſt the book of *Geneſis*.

Firſt, *F. Martinius* obſerves, that the common opinion of the *Chineſe*, is, that the world had a beginning: and tho' there be ſome of them of *Epicurus*'s opinion, yet there was never any amongſt them, that was for the eternity of the world, but ſince the incarnation of Chriſt, and the introduction of idolatry amongſt them.

Secondly, he tells us, that they commonly acknowledge a God, whom they call *Xangti*, which is not the name, but the epithet of God, this word ſignifying ſupream governour of heaven and earth.

Thirdly, he ſaith that they acknowledge a firſt man brought forth out of the chaos, in one night in the ſpring, which opinion ſome amongſt them have made intricate by the addition of their own fables.

Fourthly, he ſhews that ſacrifices have been in uſe amongſt them.

Fifthly, that they believe a certainty of puniſhments and rewards after this life, for vice and vertue.

Sixthly, that they believe the exiſtence of good and bad angels.

Seventhly, that they aſſign to ſome of them the protection of cities and provinces, and pay them great veneration at the inſtalment of their magiſtrates.

Eighthly, that they acknowledge them to be incorporeal beings, and that it is but of late, that they have erected and conſecrated ſtatues to them.

And Laſtly, that they have a very great knowledge of the flood, which in their account happened about 3500 years before Jeſus Chriſt.

Here are, we ſee many truths which are the grounds of religion, and which were known to them; from whence we may eaſily judge, in comparing thoſe truths with the hiſtory of *Moſes*, that the ancient *Chineſe* did agree with all other nations, in the believing the firſt principles of religion, laid down by *Moſes*.

We may likewiſe obſerve, that thoſe antiquities of *China*, for the moſt part, are as like thoſe recorded by *Moſes*, as a tradition (which cannot but have received many alterations during ſuch a long interval of time) can be like to an exact narrative of matters of fact drawn up by an author who knew very well what he writ.

Firſt, it appears that what they ſay, concerning the thirteen ſucceſſors of the firſt man named *Puoncuus*, all deſcended from him, is agreeable enough to the hiſtory of *Geneſis*, which ſets down the ſucceſſive Patriarchs from father to ſon: all the difference is, that the *Chineſe*, by a fooliſh ambition of appropriating all to themſelves, maintain that thoſe thirteen kings were all in *China*.

Secondly, what they tell us of the world being civiliz'd under the ſecond of thoſe kings, call'd *Thienhoang*, after the death of the great dragon that had diſturbed heaven and earth, agrees very well with the hiſtory of *Seth*, who began to form mankind to a right notion of the worſhip of God, when he ſeparated them from *Cain*'s family.

Thirdly, it is very probable that when the *Chineſe* have reckoned up thirteen kings lineally deſcended from the firſt man, and his ſucceſſors, they have included in that number *Cain* and *Abel*, who tho' they were both the ſons of the firſt man, yet were not reckon'd up by *Moſes*, becauſe his ſcope was only to give an account of the lineal deſcent of *Adam*'s poſterity by *Seth*.

They believe that under *Ginhohang* there was a kind of golden age, the earth being then fruitful to admiration, and that under his ſucceſſor men being extreamly ſimple, and altogether ignorant of the ſeveral arts neceſſary to human life, as of characters and letters, one *Sujus*, to ſupply the want of them, contrived a way of keeping up the memory of things, by tying ſeveral ſorts of knots upon a cord.

All which ſufficiently evinces, that the belief of the worlds being lately created according to *Moſes*'s deſcription, was as much received by the ancient people of *China*, as by all other nations.

And here it is further obſervable, That the *Chineſe* themſelves according to *Martinius*'s account, do ſuſpect all the hiſtorical records of their empire, before king *Fohius*, looking upon them as falſe and ridiculous: and indeed the people of that country before *Fohius*, living like brute beaſts, without any ſettled government, laws, or arts: this alone is enough to confute thoſe amongſt the *Chineſe*, who maintain now adays, that the duration of the world before *Confucius*, who lived about 500 years before *Jeſus Chriſt*, was of no leſs than three millions two hundred threeſcore and ſeven thouſand years. For hereby it clearly appears, that they have fooliſhly affected to ſurpaſs the *Chaldeans* in their vanity, who believing the eternity of the world, pretended in order both to prove their antiquity, and to give credit to their aſtrological obſervations, that aſtrology had been exercis'd amongſt them for 472000 years before *Alexander*'s entring into *Aſia*.

After all, it is certain that their calculation of 3000 years, from *Fohius* to Jeſus Chriſt, is only incompatible with *Moſes*'s chronology, according to the *Hebrew* text, and not at all with that of the *Septuagint*.

But moreover, what can be more palpably fabulous than the whole hiſtory of *Fohius*, whom the *Chineſe* ſuppoſe to have begun his reign 2952 years before Jeſus Chriſt? Firſt, he is call'd the ſon of heaven, becauſe, they ſay, he had a mother and no father; and that his mother conceived him by the banks of a lake near the town of *Lanthieu*, where as ſhe was walking, ſhe ſaw the footſteps of a man upon the ſand, and was at the ſame time ſurrounded on a ſuddain with a rainbow.

Secondly, the ſituation of that town which is in the weſt of *China*, do's demonſtrate that the firſt inhabitants of *China* came thither from the weſtern parts of the world, and that conſequently they were of *Shem*'s poſterity, according to *Moſes*'s account in the tenth of *Geneſis*.

Thirdly, altho' there be perhaps no incongruity in their aſcribing to him the ſtudy of aſtronomy, and the invention of ſeveral inſtitutions neceſſary

ceſſary to human ſociety, as laws, *&c.* yet what they add, that he was the firſt inventer of ſeveral figures, which he had ſeen upon the back of a dragon, ſufficiently ſhews, that either the whole ſtory is but a fable, or that he was a cheat, and impoſed upon the ſimplicity of ignorant people.

What probability is there (ſeeing it is ſuppoſed *China*, was then all over infeſted and overgrown with barbariſm) that in his time it ſhould be recorded in writing, 1. That he invented, inſtead of thoſe knots before mentioned, the *hieroglyphicks*, which are almoſt as obſcure. 2. That men were then diſtinguiſhed from women by the difference of their garments. 3. That marriages were then fixed and regulated which before were as promiſcuous amongſt men as amongſt beaſts.

What they ſay of his being the author of a muſical inſtrument of 36 cords, ſhews evidently the falſhood of the ſtory; for there is nothing more improbable, than to ſuppoſe that he ſhould arrive to ſuch perfection of improvement in muſick as that comes to, when that art had but very lately been invented. It is all that men could attain unto, after they have long improved this art, the beginnings whereof, without doubt, as of all other arts, were very rough and imperfect.

Surely the *Egyptians* were more reaſonable when they attributed the invention of the *lyre* with three ſtrings to *Mercury*, *Saturn*'s ſecretary, who is the ſame with *Noah*.

The hiſtory of *China* takes notice that the beginning of huſbandry and phyſick was under *Fohius*'s ſucceſſor, it do's not mention whether he was his ſon, or no; but it only gives an account of the firſt war, wherein he was routed by a petty king, one of his ſubjects, who ſucceeded him in the empire.

And what is moſt ſingular in that record, is, that therein is aſcribed to that uſurper, 1. The invention of the *cycle* of 60 years, which ſerves to fix their chronology. 2. The method of regulating weights and meaſures. 3. That it was by his means and encouragement that ſome of his contemporary ſubjects found out the ſphere, arithmetick, laws, judicial aſtrology, ſeveral muſical inſtruments, the art of dying, and of coining, the joyners and carpenters trade, ſo far as to make boats and bridges. They pretend that he never dy'd, but that he was tranſlated alive into that place which the *Chineſe* do aſſign for eternal happineſs. 'Tis *Pliny*'s (*m*) obſervation, that this way and cuſtom of deifying the firſt inventors of arts, neceſſary to human life, is very ancient; but if it be an old cuſtom, it is alſo a pregnant ſign of the ignorance that reigned amongſt thoſe ancient people that uſed it. Therefore we may as juſtly ſuſpect the hiſtory of the *Chineſe*, among whom it is in uſe, as the *Egyptian* accounts, which were much of the ſame nature in *Alexander*'s time, as we are informed by *Diodorus Siculus*. The poſterity or the ſucceſſors of thoſe famous men have always affected in proceſs of time, by ſuch means, to immortalize their names, to the end they might raiſe up themſelves and their families as well to power and authority, as to honour and veneration, above all other men with whom they converſed.

But however, we may reaſonably conjecture that thoſe ſeveral paſſages

(*m*) Lib. ii. cap. 7. Hiſt. Nat.

recorded in that hiſtory, having for the greateſt part of them, a great conformity with the tranſactions related in *Moſes* hiſtory which was not unknown to the *Chaldeans*, with whom the *Chineſe* had communication and correſpondence; all thoſe pretences and claims of theirs to the invention of theſe arts, is an honour which they have borrow'd from others to lend it to the founders of their empire; juſt as the *Egyptians* have appropriated to their firſt kings, ſome arts which were found out by the Patriarchs before the flood; or as the *Greeks* have made their firſt princes the firſt inventors of thoſe very arts, the invention of which the *Egyptians* aſcribed to their firſt kings.

And this reflexion will appear the more probable and natural, if we conſider what they relate, that under the fourth ſucceſſor of *Fohius*, there aroſe an impoſtor famous by his deluſions, who endeavoured to alter the religion of the *Chineſe*, and to bring in idolatry amongſt them; which brought great misfortunes upon *China*. For hereby it is evident, that the *Chineſe* in their hiſtory have diſguiſed, and ſo appropriated to themſelves, ſome paſſages which relate to *Nimrod*'s time, ſince the original of idolatry is to be referr'd to the time of building of the tower of *Babel*, which was intended for an idol temple, if we will believe what paſſes for a received opinion amongſt the *Jews*.

Chuenhious is ſaid to have been the reſtorer of the worſhip of one God, and to have annexed the prieſthood to the kingly power; and to have regulated the *Calendar*, and to have found out the ephemerides of the five planets, after an entire conjunction of thoſe five planets, before the day of the conjunction of the ſun with the moon, and to have fixed to that day, the beginning of the year, which agrees with our beginning the year in *January*.

But yet it is to be obſerved,

1. That notwithſtanding this pretended aſtronomical obſervation, there have been ſeveral alterations made of the beginning of the year according to the fanſie and pleaſure of ſeveral emperors, which ſhews that there was no conſtant rule obſerved in that countrey.

2. That *Martinius* ſeems to have approved of the calculation of this conjunction of five planets in *Aquarius*, to accommodate the falſe aſtrological prejudice of the *Chineſe*, with that of ſeveral authors, who looking upon the flood as a natural event, have groundleſly imagined, that it was brought to paſs by the virtue and influence of ſuch a conjunction, and that it was a certain ſign of a flood. 'Tis this fooliſh and whimſical fanſie which hath made ſome *Grecians* prepoſterouſly ſedulous in ſeeking out that dreadful year, the winter whereof, was to drown the world with a flood, and the ſummer to burn it with a general conflagration, as *Cenſorinus* * and *Ariſtotle* † have obſerved it. 'Tis a judicious remark which *Origanus* ‖ hath made upon the obſervations of thoſe aſtrologers, who from the conjunction of the planets in humid ſigns, uſe to foretel prodigious rains, for he ſhews, that there is nothing more groundleſs and uncertain than ſuch obſervations: and he gives a famous and remarkable inſtance of that uncertainty to the eternal ſhame of aſtrology, which is this; *John Staffler*, as *Cardan* tells us, having obſerved ſuch a conjunction of all the planets

* *Cenſ. de die nat. c.* 18.

† *Ariſt. l.* 1. *meteor. c.* 14.

‖ *Tom.* 1. *ephemer. p.* 481.

planets in *Piſces*, in the year 1524. foretold that there ſhould come a general flood, whereof ſeveral people being afraid, retired to the tops of high mountains; but without any cauſe, for there was never ſeen a greater ſerenity of weather.

3. *Martinius* was certainly miſtaken, when he aſcribed to *Chuenhious* the regulating the *emphemerides* of the five leſſer planets; ſeeing there are no ſuch *ephemerides* in *China*, according to all the relations we have of that countrey; nor yet any of the ſun and moon ſo exact, as we have in *Europe*; a pregnant demonſtration of which, is that the miſſionary Jeſuits have been raiſed up to the dignity of the chiefeſt *Mandarins* in *China*, only becauſe their ſkill and learning in aſtrology, was found to exceed that of any the moſt learned men amongſt the *Chineſe*, by many degrees.

Theſe things I thought fit to obſerve, to ſhew that there is nothing in the hiſtory of *China*, which they ſo much cry up, that can any ways invalidate the authority of *Moſes*'s accounts in his book of *Geneſis*, but what rather confirms it, if it be conſidered with attention.

It was not without reaſon, that I have ſuppoſed, that the memory of thoſe ancient tranſactions, was conveyed, tho' confuſedly, to the *Chineſe*; we have already intimated one of thoſe probable means of conveyance of this tradition, by their commerce which the *Chaldeans*, who were well informed of the greateſt part of thoſe ſeveral tranſactions, and who had great intercourſe with the remoteſt nations of *Aſia*, towards the eaſt. To this we may add another argument, yet more certain and ſure; which is the continual commerce, that hath always been betwixt the *Indies* and *China*, and the communication which the inhabitants of the neighbouring countries of the red ſea, have always had with all the eaſtern nations of the world. For it is plain, that this commerce gave a great opportunity of communicating to thoſe eaſtern nations, the knowledge of all thoſe paſſages which were known to the *Chaldeans:* juſt as the like commerce with the weſtern nations of the world, proved a means of conveying to them the knowledge of the moſt part of the ſame things, which in proceſs of time became the ground of the moſt ancient fables amongſt the *Greeks*, among whom thoſe fables made up the beſt part of their divinity.

But beſides all this, we may mention here another very likely means of conveyance, *viz.* the commerce of the *Chineſe* with the *Tartars*, among whom the *Jews* of the ten tribes were diſperſed and ſetled, within a ſhort time after their captivity in *Aſſyria*. For as thoſe *Jews* had with them the books of *Moſes*, ſo they eaſily gave a great inſight and knowledge in ancient hiſtory to thoſe nations, that have appropriated it to themſelves, as may be made out, by comparing their fabulous hiſtory, with thoſe books of *Moſes*, which contain in effect, all that relates to the original of thoſe nations.

But whatever judgment be made of thoſe forementioned means of conveying the ancient tradition to the *Chineſe*, I think that I have good ground to affirm,

1. That the hiſtorians that have written the lives of the firſt emperors of *China*, were not contemporaries with thoſe emperors, and that

conſequently they have not recorded things ſo well known, as it was ſuppoſed.

2. That the fables intermixt in their hiſtories do ſufficiently evidence the eaſie and credulous temper of thoſe authors, which takes away from them all credit and belief.

3. That the greateſt care of thoſe authors was to perſwade the world of the pretended antiquity of their nation, and ſo to raiſe the honour and reputation of it by glorious ſtories and fables.

4. That their affectation in giving us an account of aſtronomy and judiciary aſtrology, was only to bring into credit and reputation thoſe arts, the end and ſcope of which is to impoſe upon ſimple men; which is a ridiculous affectation, and ſuch as hath expoſed the *Chaldeans* and *Egyptians* to the juſt contempt and deriſion of all other nations.

5. That there is amongſt them a diverſity of opinions contrary to one another, about their antiquity; juſt as there were ſome amongſt the *Egyptians*, who reckoned up 23000 years from the reign of the ſun to *Alexander*; when ſome others reckoned but a little above 10000 years.

6. That the *Chineſe* according to one of their own opinions, muſt ſay, that the earth was without almoſt any inhabitants for 30000 years together, and above; whereas we ſee that in the ſpace of five or ſix thouſand years, it is become inhabited as we ſee it; and that within a little more, it will be ſo overſtockt, as that it will not be able to yield proviſions enough for all its inhabitants, as a learned *Engliſh* man hath of late proved it by a mathematical demonſtration; which ſhews, that the *Chineſe* wanted certain grounds to go upon, in ſeveral accounts which they give of many tranſactions, and in the relating of which, they are beſides moſt confident.

Laſtly, that therefore, what is reported, that theſe *Chineſe* authors did all write with publick allowance for every king's deceaſe, might indeed be ſo about the latter times, as it was practic'd in *Egypt*; but that it is as abſolutely falſe, that the *Chineſe* had ever in former times, ſuch publick hiſtorians, and as it is falſe, that the *Egyptians* had formerly any ſuch, although they were as confident to ſay they had in *Alexander*'s time, as the *Chineſe* are now.

But this, I think, is ſufficient for the clearing of that matter. We muſt now anſwer the laſt objection of *Atheiſts* againſt the authority of the book of *Geneſis*.

CHAP. XXI.

Wherein the laſt Objection of Atheists, *is anſwered.*

AS I intend to clear all the difficulties which may ariſe about this important matter, in the minds of thoſe that ſhall peruſe theſe obſervations; I think my ſelf obliged to prevent and reſolve, the only

only plauſible objection, I know remaining, after all what I have ſaid upon this ſubject.

Perhaps ſome will be apt to reply here, that they indeed confeſs *Moſes* to be the author of *Geneſis*, and that, if that book had really been ſuppoſititious, it could never have gone under his name, nor be received as his in after ages. But that yet all this does not prove ſufficiently the truth of thoſe tranſactions recorded in that book. Becauſe *Moſes* may have forced upon the people of *Iſrael* the belief of them, by thoſe laws that he enacted amongſt them, by which it was death for any man to dare to conteſt the truth of any thing he had written in his books. This I think, is all, that the moſt contentious *Atheiſts* can think of, to undermine the authority of *Moſes*'s hiſtory.

But this objection is eaſily anſwered, for it confutes it ſelf. For,

Firſt, it ſuppoſes the truth of theſe great miracles, by which God eſtabliſh'd *Moſes* the head and captain of the people of *Iſrael*; which miracles are every whit as hard to believe, as the ſeveral accounts of other things which we read of, in the book of *Geneſis*.

We find accordingly, amongſt the heathens themſelves many monuments of thoſe miracles done by the miniſtry of *Moſes*, when he brought the *Iſraelites* out of *Egypt:* as I intend to ſhew in my obſervations upon the other four books of *Moſes*.

Secondly, they muſt at leaſt ſuppoſe, that *Moſes* hath given a true account of ſeveral paſſages, in which he could not impoſe upon other nations, which did not acknowledge his authority, as for example, all that relates to the building of the ark, the greateſt piece of architecture that was then in the world; and to the raiſing of the tower of *Babel*, the greateſt building that ever was, and part of which is yet extant, for all theſe things were as ſo many witneſſes of the truth of thoſe tranſactions which he related.

Thirdly, they muſt likewiſe ſuppoſe, that he hath related ſeveral other paſſages as exactly as he did thoſe, as for example, that of the diviſion of tongues, which is an appendix of the hiſtory of the tower of *Babel*; that of the deſtruction of *Sodom*, the original of the neighbouring nations of *Canaan*, that of the *Jews*, of the *Moabites*, of the *Ammonites*, of the *Iſhmaelites*, and *Edomites*; for it is ridiculous to conceive, that this lawgiver ſhould ever hope to perſwade other nations to believe any falſe ſtories about matters ſo well, and ſo generally known, as thoſe were amongſt themſelves.

Fourthly, they muſt ſuppoſe further, that he hath given a true account of the original of the *Iſraelites*, whoſe head and governor he was. How great and abſolute ſoever the authority of *Moſes* might be, it is ridiculous to imagine, that ever he would have derived the original of the *Iſraelites* from any other, than from their true anceſtors. This appears the more neceſſary in that we ſee by the accounts he gives of things, and pedigrees in *Geneſis*, that he wrote that book eſpecially from the hiſtory of *Abraham*, on to the end of it, only to ſhew the rights, and juſt pretenſions of the *Iſraelites*, upon the land of *Canaan*.

Fifthly, they muſt yet further acknowledge, whither they will or not, the truth of the accounts he gives, concerning the original of the pretenſions and diviſions, which were kept up amongſt the twelve tribes of

Iſrael; now theſe pretenſions having no other ground, than the oracles which are related in his hiſtory; they ſufficiently prove the authority of thoſe oracles againſt all the pretenſions and objections of the Atheiſts.

What violence ſoever they may pretend that *Moſes* might uſe to force an implicit belief of his hiſtory and blind obedience to his laws, yet no man of common ſenſe and reaſon can ever think, that he would have fill'd the accounts he gives of things of that nature, with lies, or that if he had done it, he could ever have expected, that his falſe accounts of them, ſhould ever have been credited by the neighbouring nations, or even by his own ſubjects.

But without urging here ſeveral other abſurdities, which plainly ſhew, that there is no diſtinction to be found, betwixt the accounts of things which *Moſes* recites as publickly known, and thoſe which he relates of his own head, and private knowledge; there being, as I have already ſhew'd, betwixt all thoſe ſeveral accounts, ſuch a natural coherence, and neceſſary concatenation, that they cannot be divided from one another, without deſtroying the whole frame of his hiſtory: I ſay, that it is impoſſible, that the law, by which he makes it death, for any one to conteſt the truth of his narration, ſhould make the ſincerity of it ſuſpected.

I do not urge here, that there is an evident abſurdity to ſuppoſe, that *Moſes* would ever have related together all thoſe tranſactions, as the grounds of religion, if they had been abſolutely unknown in the world before him.

Neither do I mention here, that ſuppoſe *Moſes* had been ſo imprudent, as to attempt ſuch an undertaking, yet there is no reaſon to believe, that a whole nation, and that a very numerous one, would have long perſevered in a profeſſion forced upon them by meer violence and tyranny.

Nor do I think it neceſſary to obſerve here, that the people of *Iſrael* were neither ſo patient, nor ſo eaſily perſwaded by *Moſes*, nor yet ſo ſubmiſſive to him, as theſe objectors do imagine.

That is plain, and apparent enough from all their ſeditions and conſpiracies againſt him.

Nor do I judge it neceſſary to obſerve here what is plain enough of it ſelf, *viz.* that *Moſes* had no ſucceſſor any ways concern'd, to countenance and defend theſe pretended fictions and fables of his hiſtory, *Joſhua* his immediate ſucceſſor was of another tribe; and ſo were all the ſucceeding governors of *Iſrael*, until the *Maccabees* came.

But what I think deſerves beſt to be obſerved here, is, that after *Moſes* and *Joſhua*'s deceaſe, the people of *Iſrael* was brought under the ſubjection of the *Canaanites*, and conſequently freed from the terror of that law of *Moſes*'s making, by which it was death for any one to conteſt the authority of his laws, and the truth of all his writings; there is but a little more than forty years interval betwixt the conqueſt of *Canaan* by *Joſhua*, and the bondage of the *Iſraelites* under the neighbouring nations. Had it not been a fit time then, to caſt off the yoak of *Moſes*'s laws, and to publiſh the pretended lies and impoſtures of his hiſtory? Was not the compariſon which the *Iſraelites* could eaſily make betwixt the *Moſaick* writings, and the tradition generally received in the countrey of their captivity, a natural and ready means to undeceive them.

Yet notwithſtanding all this, we ſee that they obſtinately entertain the belief

belief of the ſeveral tranſactions recorded by *Moſes*, and ſtand firmly to all their pretenſions: nay, we ſee them have recourſe to the remedy of repentance which *Moſes* preſcribed them to uſe in thoſe ſad misfortunes which he foretold ſhould befal them, and out of which he promis'd, at the ſame time, that God would miraculouſly deliver them; which indeed was done accordingly, even fourteen times within leſs than four hundred years, as is manifeſt from the book of *Judges*.

Can there then be a more pregnant argument, that if *Moſes* made it death by one of his ſanctions, for any of the *Iſraelites*, to conteſt the truth either of his writings, or of his oracles, and miracles, it was not to force the belief of them without examination, but rather only to prevent the corruption of that people, and their mingling and confounding themſelves with the heathens, which God intended to hinder on purpoſe, becauſe he would have the Meſſiah to be born according to his promiſe, out of that nation, which to effect, he thought fit in his infinite wiſdom, to employ the rigour of ſome capital laws, to keep that people unmixt and diſtinguiſh'd from all other nations of the world, till the Meſſiah was born.

CHAP. XXII.

The Conſequences of what we have proved in our foregoing Obſervations upon the Book of GENESIS.

THESE ſeveral Obſervations which I have made upon the Book of *Geneſis*, are all, I think, very natural and eaſie; and if I am not miſtaken, ſufficient to prove ſolidly, the truth of *Moſes*'s account, of the creation of the world, and of the promiſe of the Meſſiah, which is the foundation of the Chriſtian religion.

The concluſion that I draw out of the premiſes is, That,

Firſt, I aſſert, that *Moſes* that famous *Hebrew*, who was deſign'd to be the heir of *Pharaoh*'s daughter, is the true and ſole author of the book of *Geneſis*.

Secondly, I maintain, that this being once granted, he could not, according to his way of writing, record thoſe important tranſactions, he relates otherwiſe than they really came to paſs.

Thirdly, I maintain, that tho' he had not been an eye-witneſs of the creation of the world, yet he hath made the deſcription of it according to ſuch an authentick tradition, as cannot be reaſonably doubted of, becauſe it was then the univerſal tradition, not only of the *Moabites*, of the *Ammonites*, of the *Iſhmaelites*, and of the *Edomites*, who were all of *Sem*'s poſterity, and amongſt whom he had been travelling for forty years together; but alſo of the *Egyptians*, of his own people, and in a word, of all men then living in the world.

Fourthly, I maintain, that he never was found fault with, nor contradicted, till true reaſon and ſence, if I may ſay ſo, was loſt and baniſh'd

niſh'd from amongſt mankind, till the *Egyptians*, for example, they who uſed before, to look upon the *Greeks* as meer children and ideots, were fallen into ſo great a ſtupidity and deprivation of ſence, as to believe and maintain, that men were firſt born in *Egypt*, becauſe forſooth, frogs did naturally, as they thought, breed out of their muddy fenns and marſhes.

Fifthly, I maintain, that for many ages after *Moſes*, no body did ever publickly declare for the eternity of the world, nor yet for its fortuitous production. Theſe opinions are meer abſurdities and chimeras, brought forth into the world by the *Chaldeans* and *Greeks*, only about *Alexander*'s time, or perhaps an hundred years before him, *i. e.* about eleven or twelve hundred years after *Moſes*'s deceaſe.

Sixthly, I maintain, that ſeeing there is no particular time to be found, wherein the reading of the law was interrupted and diſcontinued for any conſiderable time amongſt the *Jews*, ſeeing it continues ſtill to this very hour amongſt them every ſabbath day, in the ſeveral places of the world, wherein they are diſperſed; and ſeeing beſides, that it is certain, that this law, which enjoyns the obſervation of the ſabbath, in remembrance of the creation, could never be impoſed upon them, without their perceiving and declaring preſently the novelty and ſuppoſition of that account, and conſequently of the book wherein it is related.

Seeing all this is certain, I do poſitively maintain, that the truth of the creation can never be better proved, than it is by the book of *Geneſis*, becauſe in it *Moſes* hath followed the tradition of all the ages that preceded him, and only recorded in writing, what was then generally known of all men in the world; and that in a time when every man was able to run his own pedigree up to *Adam*.

Laſtly, I maintain, that as the certainty of the creation cannot reaſonably be doubted of, without rejecting at the ſame time all thoſe proofs from facts which I have brought to ſtrengthen my aſſertion. So there is all the reaſon in the world to entertain the belief of it, as of a matter of fact which is indiſputable: as being related by the moſt ancient hiſtorian, confirmed by the moſt ancient tradition, believed by the moſt ancient people of the world, who did not only believe it, but alſo, had always had, according to God's command, the memory of it celebrated amongſt them and their anceſtors, in all their generations fifty two times in a year, from the very beginning of the world.

PREFACE.

PREFACE.

WHEN I began at firſt theſe Reflexions upon the Book of *Geneſis*, I deſign'd only to demonſtrate the certainty of the creation of the firſt man, and ſo to ſhew by arguments from matters of fact, that neither the creation of the world, nor yet the promiſe of the Meſſiah, which God made to man after his ſin, can reaſonably be diſputed or doubted of.

I deſign'd after that, to eſtabliſh the truth of Chriſt's reſurrection, by ſuch another undeniable argument, *viz.* by ſhewing, that the Apoſtles were eye witneſſes of it, and inſtituted a ſolemn day in every week, to celebrate and perpetuate the memory of it, amongſt men, from their time down to the end of the world. And this I thought was ſufficient to demonſtrate the truth of the Chriſtian Religion: for as the *Jews* by the continual celebration of the ſabbath, every week, could eaſily run back to the creation of the world, which was the occaſion of the inſtitution of the ſabbath, ſo the Chriſtians may by the weekly obſervation of the Lord's day prove Chriſt's reſurrection, which occaſioned the inſtitution of the Lord's day. If we conſider the thing in it ſelf, there is no leſs abſurdity to diſpute our Saviour's reſurrection, than the creation of the firſt man.

Now if this argument holds, as there can be no eaſier, ſo neither can there be a ſtronger proof of the truth of the Chriſtian Religion, for provided we be once well aſſured of the certainty of Chriſt's reſurrection, we muſt acknowledge him to be the true Meſſiah, and conſequently embrace his religion.

But it ſeems in the heat of meditation, I was inſenſibly carried further, in my obſervations upon the promiſe of the Meſſiah, than I thought at firſt to be. Therefore, inſtead of paſſing now, as I propoſed in the beginning, to the proof of Chriſt's reſurrection, which is a ſolid and compendious way of demonſtrating the truth of his religion, I find my ſelf engaged according to my preſent method, to continue to make the like Reflexions upon the other Books of Holy Scripture, that I may yet more fully demonſtrate, that Jeſus Chriſt is the true Meſſiah, whom God promiſed to man immediately after his ſin.

And this I intend to ſhew ſo plainly, as will make it evident, that God hath really accompliſhed his firſt deſigns, and exactly performed all his promiſes relating to the Meſſiah, according to the firſt idea's, he gave of his coming to the ancient Patriarchs.

Firſt, then I deſign to trace up the method that God was pleaſed to uſe,

uſe, to make the Meſſiah known without miſtake, when ever he ſhould come into the world.

Secondly, I will make ſome Reflexions upon the ſeveral notions he gave of him long before in his oracles, to characterize his perſon, his offices, his actions, his ſufferings, his glory, &c.

Laſt of all I will ſhew, that we have all this whole project and deſign exactly accompliſhed in the hiſtory of the Goſpel, as it was written by Chriſt's diſciples. Now as this method which God hath particularly choſen to make the Meſſiah known, appears alſo in the other Books of *Moſes*. So I think it will not be amiſs for me particularly to view and examine theſe Books, that I may have occaſion to illuſtrate ſeveral things in them, which deſerve a particular attention, eſpecially when they are conſidered together, and as it were at one view.

For the prophecies being thus conſider'd together in their connexion and progreſs, do more plainly evidence God's deſign, and may better convince or confound the *Jews*. Therefore I intend accordingly to conſider thoſe oracles with attention, and to join them together, that ſo they may in their conjunction caſt forth the brighter beams of light, to the conviction of all infidels who may happen to peruſe this book.

For I am perſwaded that, after the peruſal of my obſervations in it, an ordinary attention in the reading of the Goſpel will be ſufficient to convince any man, that Jeſus Chriſt is the true Meſſiah, which is all I intend to prove, as the concluſion of this Treatiſe.

Now as the examination of the Patriarchs religion according to the account *Moſes* hath given us of it in his book of *Geneſis*, hath taken up the firſt part of it; ſo I deſign to examine in this ſecond part the *Iſraelites* religion, and to follow in my ſearch the account which *Moſes* gives of it in his other four Books.

And as to effect this, it is very important to eſtabliſh beforehand the authority of thoſe four Books: ſo I intend to ſhew firſt of all, that *Moſes* is the true author of them, and that they have intrinſick characters of undeniable certainty.

Then ſecondly, it will be natural for me, to ſhew, that *Moſes* in the writing of them, had the promiſe of the Meſſiah in view, as particularly promiſed of God to the Patriarchs of his own nation, and as being conſequently the principal, if not the ſole object of their hope.

Thirdly, I intend to ſhew, that if we ſeriouſly examine *Moſes*'s laws, we ſhall find in them ſuch a method obſerved, as is both very agreeable to the manifeſtation of God's deſign in *Geneſis*, and very worthy of his wiſdom, eſpecially if we conſider what he was pleaſed to reveal unto us of his intentions, by the Prophets who followed *Moſes*.

REFLEXIONS

REFLEXIONS

UPON THE FOUR LAST

BOOKS OF MOSES,

TO

ESTABLISH THE TRUTH

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

CHAP. I.

That it cannot reaſonably be doubted, but that MOSES *is the Author of* EXODUS, *and of the three other following Books.*

THIS is a Truth which may be grounded upon ſeveral ſolid arguments.

I might obſerve, That *Moſes* hath always been acknowledged, by the very heathens themſelves, not only to be the moſt ancient hiſtorian, but alſo the moſt ancient legiſlator in the world.

I might likewiſe obſerve, That there is a particular connexion betwixt the book of *Geneſis* and the other books of *Moſes*, as well in regard of the general deſign of their author, as of the matters treated of in them. For example, we ſee that the greateſt part of the laws and tranſactions which we find written and recorded there, derive their original from thoſe tranſactions and paſſages that we read of in *Geneſis*. Thus we may plainly

ly diſcern that the pretenſion of the *Iſraelites* upon the land of *Canaan*, was grounded upon the promiſe that God made to *Abraham* to give it to his poſterity, in the fourth generation. Thus we may ſee, that the *Amalekites* could have no other reaſon to make war againſt the *Iſraelites*, than the old alliance that was formerly made betwixt *Amalek* and the *Canaanites*, which without doubt engaged his poſterity to be the firſt oppoſers of the eſtabliſhment of the *Iſraelites* in the land of *Canaan*. Thus we ſee that the ſeditions of the *Iſraelites* againſt *Moſes* under *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, did proceed from the order of the birth of the children of *Iſrael*, as it is ſet down in *Geneſis*, becauſe the eldeſt thinking themſelves wrong'd of their birthright, thought they might juſtly rebel againſt *Moſes* in order to recover it.

But I haſte to things more material than theſe. And firſt it is here obſervable, that thoſe books were not only religiouſly kept in every family of *Iſrael*; but that they were alſo once ſolemnly depoſited in the tabernacle as a publick record, and that by *Moſes* himſelf a little before his death, that they might be a teſtimony againſt that people, as we read it *Deuteronomy* XXXI. 26.

Secondly, it cannot be denied that *Moſes* did ſtraightly charge both *Joſhuah*, and the heads of the people, to read them frequently and carefully, for it is expreſly ſaid ſo, *Joſhua* I. 8. Nay, we ſee about 500 years after, the holy man *David*, who had made, during his life, the ſupream felicity of a man to conſiſt in the reading the law of God day and night (*n*): we ſee, I ſay, that holy man give in his death-bed the ſame charge to *Solomon*, I *Kings*.

Thirdly, moreover it is certain that there were many laws and ſanctions contained in thoſe books, which are the foundation of the hiſtory of ſucceeding times. And this is the reaſon why we read nothing in the book of *Joſhua* concerning the ſeveral bleſſings and curſes which were to be pronounced upon the mounts *Ebal* and *Gerizim*, becauſe the form of them was to be borrowed from the books of *Moſes* which were publick and authentick. The ſame reflexion may be made upon the law of the firſt-fruits, and upon the prayer which was to be made upon the tithes of the third year; as likewiſe upon many other laws.

Fourthly, it is certain that thoſe books were read over every ſeventh year, according to the injunction of that law, which we find in *Deuteronomy* XXXI. 10, 11. which was commanded to be done for the inſtruction of poſterity, as it is intimated in the thirteenth *verſe* of the ſame *chapter*. Whereupon it may not be prepoſterous to conſider here God's methods, to prevent all forgery and impoſture in this matter.

We ſee that it was, during the longævity of human life, a conſtant and univerſal cuſtom amongſt all the Patriarch's to *Moſes*'s time, to put (when they lay on their death beds) their poſterity in mind of the moſt important truths, and of the fundamental articles of religion, becauſe as all admonitions and exhortations made at ſuch a time, are always look'd upon as ſincere, ſo they ſeldom fail of being favourably conſtrued and better entertained, than they would be at any other time. We have as inſtances of this ancient cuſtom, the examples of *Abraham*, of *Iſaac*, of *Jacob*, of *Joſeph*, &c. who in that, I make no doubt, follow'd the cuſtom

(*n*) Pſal. i.

cuſtom of their pious anceſtors, who in all likelyhood derived it from *Adam* himſelf. That cuſtom we ſee was of an admirable uſe to perpetuate the memory of illuſtrious tranſactions: what was then ſpoken by thoſe pious venerable men, was a kind of a publick ſermon, becauſe it was delivered before thoſe numerous families, which met then altogether about the bed of their common head and father; and that upon ſuch an occaſion as did extraordinarily excite their attention.

To this cuſtom ſucceeded another, which was, that when the greateſt captains and judges of the people of *Iſrael*, were ſenſible of their approaching death, then they uſually called the people together, to give them ſuch exhortations, reproofs, and admonitions, as they judged moſt proper, either for their encouragement, or for their reformation; nay, and that even in ſome occaſions many of them have affected to have their ſpeeches made publick, and depoſited in the tabernacle: thus did *Moſes* and *Joſhuah*, and the greateſt number of the Judges, and *Samuel*, and *Solomon*, &c.

We know that the books of *Moſes* were formerly read every ſabbath day; as St. *James* does atteſt it in *Acts* XV. And tho' there be no expreſs command about it in *Moſes*'s writings, yet we find there, ſomething equivalent to it, in the ſtrict charge given by him to all the people, to be continually converſant in his books, and to inſtruct their families at all times in the laws and doctrines delivered in them; for it is plain, that if the *Iſraelites* were bound by that command of *Moſes* to read his books every day, they were more particularly obliged, by the ſame command, to read them on the ſabbath day, which was made a day of reſt by God; particularly on purpoſe, that all men might the better attend on that day to the reading and meditating God's laws, and the performing all other religious duties.

We know beſides that thoſe books were continually explained both by the doctors of the law, and the *Levites*, who were on purpoſe diſperſed through the whole land of *Canaan*, that they might the better attend and perform the duties of their miniſtry.

We ſee that *Moſes* in his writings hath exactly kept a kind of journal, which cannot eaſily receive any alteration. If we read hereupon what relates to the ſojourning of the *Iſraelites*, and the ſeveral removals of their tents in the deſert, we ſhall be eaſily convinc'd by the very form and ſtile of thoſe books, as we have them now, that they were formerly publickly received, and were exactly tranſcribed out of the original, and that if in proceſs of time they ſuffered any alteration, it was only as to ſome appendices or poſtſcripts inſerted by *Eſrah*, or ſome other Prophet, by way of explication.

We ſee in thoſe books a hiſtory written without diſguiſe or partiality, exact in relating all circumſtances, of places, times, and perſons, even in the narration of things of ſmall importance for the main drift of the author; there are beſides, ſome paſſages recorded in them, which any author, who lived after *Moſes*'s time, would certainly have left out, if for no other reaſon, yet at leaſt to aboliſh the memory of ſome actions diſhonourable to ſome great families, and whole tribes of *Iſrael*.

Again, we read in them the ſongs, and other publick monuments

which were made upon extraordinary occaſions, to preſerve the memory of them the better.

I have but three obſervations more to make here, and then I have done with this chapter.

The firſt is, that thoſe books have been conſtantly quoted by all the authors amongſt that people who followed *Moſes*, and that their quotations do exactly agree with the text of thoſe books, as we have them now, which is a certain ſign, as well of the ſincerity, as of the antiquity of that author. They were as much eſteemed in *Iſrael* as in *Juda*, both people did obſerve them as their law: the Prophets that aroſe from time to time, did always, and upon all occaſions acknowledge, and maintain their authority.

Thus we find in the book of *Joſhua*, quoted out of them, what relates to the curſes and bleſſings, to the prophecies, and diviſions of the land of *Canaan*, amongſt the tribes of *Iſrael*. The whole hiſtory of the thirteen judges, whom God raiſed up amongſt the people, is nothing in general, but an account of the accompliſhment of that promiſe, which God had made formerly by *Moſes*, to raiſe up from among that people ſuch men in the time of their afflictions and captivities, as would be the aſſertors of their liberty.

We ſee there in particular, the execution of *Moſes*'s order, concerning *Caleb*, and of that law in *Deuteronomy*, which preſcribes the manner of diſmiſſing from the army thoſe that are fearful and faint-hearted; and of that other concerning the *Nazarites* (*o*), &c.

Thus we ſee, that the rules and laws preſcribed in thoſe books, continued in force in the time of *Ruth*, *David*'s great grand-mother, that appears plainly, by their obſervation of thoſe laws, which enjoyn'd the next kinſman to take to wife the widow of his deceaſed relation, and to redeem his inheritance. As for *David* and *Solomon*, they are continually alluding to ſomething or other delivered in thoſe books: *Nehemiah* quotes them in Chap. XIII. of his book, and that was in the year of the world 3563, and ſo does *Malachy* in the IV. and V. Chapters of his propheſie, in the year 3580.

The ſecond obſervation, which is very material, is, that the author of thoſe books, hath inſerted in them an expreſs prohibition of adding any thing to them, as we ſee it *Deuteronomy* IV. 2.

It is then impoſſible, ſeeing that the whole people of the *Jews* have always acknowledged the Divine authority of thoſe books, that they ſhould ever have attempted the alteration of any thing in them.

Nay, we ſee, not without wonder, that after the greateſt part of the ten tribes of *Iſrael* were tranſported into *Aſſyria*, thoſe that were ſent from *Aſſyria* to inhabit their countrey, did receive that law, and that their poſterity have kept it all along to this day, as uncorrupted as the *Jews*, altho' they continue their mortal enemies, and have been expoſed to all the changes, and revolutions, that can befal a nation, during the long interval of 2400 years.

The third obſervation, which deſerves a ſingular attention is, that notwithſtanding the great and many corruptions, which the commonwealth of *Iſrael* fell into, yet theſe books have ſtill been kept up in the ſame

(*o*) Judg. i. 20. Judg. vii. 3. Judg. xiii. 3.

ſame form that we have them now: it appears out of the hiſtory of *Joſiah* related, 2 *Kings* XXIII. 21. That after the book of the law, of *Moſes* own writing, was found in the temple, the king commanded all the people to keep the paſſover unto the Lord, *as it is written in the book of this covenant:* now we have the inſtitution of the paſſover, *Exod.* XII. which ſhews, that *Joſiah* by the book of this covenant, meant the books of *Moſes*, ſuch as we have them now adays, and ſuch as they were when *Moſes* depoſited them into the ſanctuary.

It is important to conſider well, all that is related in the forementioned chapter of II *Kings*, for we may gather out of it, that it was according to the directions of this law, that they began to reform all the ſuperſtitions and idolatries which had been introduced in their religion, and countenanced by the royal authority, from *Solomon*'s time to *Joſiah*; this chapter relates and commends the proceeding of *Joſiah*, only in oppoſition to the ill government of his predeceſſors, and to the publick monuments of their ſuperſtitions, which he aboliſhed in obedience to God's laws, contained in the books of *Moſes*.

However, it is certain, that it was no eaſie matter, to impoſe herein upon poſterity.

For firſt, the tranſactions recorded in the books of *Moſes*, did not only relate to the people of *Iſrael*, but alſo to moſt of the neighbouring nations.

Secondly, the memory of them continued ſo lively and univerſal, that almoſt 1500 years after *Moſes*, the names of thoſe magicians ſpoken of, *Exod.* VII. 11. were, as yet known, not only amongſt the *Jews*, as we ſee it by an expreſs paſſage of S. *Paul*, who ſpeaks of them, and mentioneth their names, 2 *Tim.* III. 8. but alſo among the heathens, as both *Pliny* and *Numenius* do atteſt it (*p*).

I point only at thoſe general proofs at preſent, becauſe I have already made uſe of them, and ſhewed their force in my obſervations upon *Geneſis*, and becauſe I intend to repeat, and improve ſome of them hereafter in this treatiſe. But now, in order to follow my preſent deſign, I muſt come to the more particular conſideration of the things contained in theſe books, which will much conduce to the confirmation of the ſame truth.

CHAP. II.

That both the Character of Moses's *Perſon, and the Nature of the Things he relates has always made Men read his Books with Attention.*

THE ſubject of ſome books is ſuch, as that alone would recommend them to the attention of any reader, tho' their author had no reputation in the world; but when beſides the importance of

(*p*) *Hiſt. Nat.* l. 30. c. 1.

their ſubject, the author of them is famous and of great repute, then to be ſure, they never fail to be read with ſerious attention, and preſerved with as great a care. The books of *Moſes* have both theſe advantages, ſo that they cannot reaſonably be ſuſpected of the leaſt alteration or forgery.

The firſt character that we diſcover in theſe books at the firſt viewing of them, is the great ſingularity, and admirable diverſity of their ſtile, and of the matters they treat of.

We do not ſee that other legiſlators did ever affect to act the parts of hiſtorians; no, they content themſelves with their abſolute power, to make laws, without giving any reaſon for the ſanction of them: therefore we ſee, that there is commonly nothing more dry and ſapleſs than all their regulations, about both civil and religious matters.

But *Moſes* we ſee hath followed a more reaſonable, and more ſatisfactory method, all his regulations are grounded upon the great tranſactions which he relates; he enacts no law of any conſequence, but he intimates to the *Jews*, at the ſame time, the reaſons which challenge their obedience, and makes them by that means reflect both upon the ſeveral mercies of God beſtowed upon them, and call to mind the great miracles they had been eye witneſſes of.

I confeſs indeed, that the uſe and ſcope of ſome of his regulations, is very abſtruſe, eſpecially now, that we are ignorant of the ſeveral heathen cuſtoms, which God deſign'd to aboliſh from among that people newly come out of *Egypt*, where during their captivity they had complied, and accuſtomed themſelves in a great meaſure to the rites, and religion of their maſters the *Egyptians*. But yet how abſtruſe ſoever the deſign of ſome of thoſe laws may now appear to be: we have good ground to affirm, that the general ſcope of them all was, to keep that people from idolatry in diſtinguiſhing them from all other nations, as alſo to quicken their deſires and expectations of the *Meſſiah*, the promiſe of whoſe coming had been made by God in the very beginning of the world, and renewed ſeveral times to the heads of their nation.

However we ſee in the books of thoſe laws, religion, and policy ſo interwoven together, that the latter ſeems to ſubſiſt only by the ſupport and aſſiſtance of the former, which is contrary to the cuſtom of human legiſlators, who do not ſo much regard the eſtabliſhment of religion, as the preſervation and welfare of the ſtate and common-wealth.

If any *Jew* had a mind to be informed about the tradition of his anceſtors, and the tranſactions of old, *Moſes* hath preſerved it with ſuch care, with ſo many marks of fidelity, and ſo clear and plain, that there is no other hiſtory beſides his, that can give any ſatisfactory information about the original of things: all the fables of the heathens, which yet make up the moſt ancient tradition they have, being nothing elſe but a corruption and depravation of the ſeveral truths that *Moſes* relates in his hiſtory.

If any *Jew* deſired to ſee the beginnings of that common-wealth of which he was a member; *Moſes* gives an accurate account of them.

If any *Jew* deſired to know the original of mankind, or what was the true happineſs of man, and what he ought to do, in order to be a par-

taker

taker of that happineſs, *Moſes* teaches all that with great evidence and exactneſs.

If any *Jew* had a mind to know the occaſion of thoſe ſongs that were ſo much in faſhion amongſt thoſe of his nation; he might eaſily ſatisfie his curioſity, by reading *Moſes*'s hiſtory.

If any *Jew* deſired to know what ſort of exhortations they were, which the Founder, both of their religion and common-wealth had formerly made to their fore-fathers; *Moſes* relates a great many of them in his books.

If any *Jew* had a mind to receive inſtruction about the original, and cauſe of thoſe temporal bleſſings, he enjoyed in the land of *Canaan*, which God had poſſeſs'd his nation of, after the expulſion of thoſe people that had been the inhabitants of it for many ages, *Moſes* gives as good account of all that, as can be deſired.

If any *Jew* had a mind to know the original of the ſeveral calamities that befel his nation on ſeveral occaſions; *Moſes* acquainted them both with the cauſe and remedy of all their afflictions.

Laſtly, if the *Jews* delired to be informed of the future condition of their common-wealth in after ages; *Moſes* foretells it in ſo particular and clear a manner, that they might look upon his propheſies, not as certain propheſies only, but as a plain hiſtory of future events, begun and traced out, before their accompliſhment.

All this is ſo much the more conſiderable, to oblige us to read the books of *Moſes* with care, that we may juſtly obſerve three things in his perſon, which as they raiſe him above all common authors, ſo they cannot but ſtrengthen the belief, and increaſe the eſteem and veneration, which we ought to have for his hiſtory.

The firſt is, that whereas all men are careful to conceal their own infirmities, and whatever is diſhonourable to their families: *Moſes* on the contrary ſeems to have affected to record all the things, that could blemiſh the memory of his anceſtors, and derogate to his own reputation. He blemiſhes *Jacob*'s memory by his relating, how he preferr'd *Joſeph* the ſon of his beloved wife, to *Reuben* his eldeſt, whom he unjuſtly deprived of his birthright, in favour of the other, which injuſtice is expreſly forbidden by one of *Moſes*'s laws.

Thus he lays an eternal blot and reproach upon the memory of *Levi*, the head of his own family, when he mentions his cruelty and violence againſt the *Sichemites*, and the diſperſion of his poſterity amongſt the other tribes of *Iſrael*.

Nay, what is more, he vilifies his own birth, by forbidding any marriage betwixt an aunt and her nephew, ſeeing he relates that he himſelf was born of *Jocabed* both aunt and wife to his father *Amram*; he deſcribes his own incredulity with all the ingenuity imaginable, when he repreſents the ſeveral miracles which God wrought by him, he ſeems to ſpeak of himſelf only to lay open his own failings and ſins; ſuch a ſincerity and impartiality we know confirms and increaſes mightily the authority of any author.

The ſecond thing is, that *Moſes* not regarding the advantage and honour of his own family, left the government of *Iſrael* to *Joſhuah*, one of the tribe of *Ephraim*, and ſo reduced his own children, and their poſte-

rity to the low condition of the reſt of the *Levites*, who were of an inferiour rank to that of prieſts; for we do not ſee that they ever after renew'd the pretenſions which they might otherwiſe have had to ſucceed *Moſes*; now ſuch neglect of his family ſhews, that *Moſes*'s principles were raiſed much above the ordinary pitch of the generality of law-givers, who were abſolute and ſupream over their people.

The third thing obſervable here is, that *Moſes* had no ſhare in the conqueſt of the land of *Canaan*; it all was ſubdued after his death: nay, it was that conqueſt, that fixed, and ſetled the common-wealth of *Iſrael*, which was before unſetled, and as it were ambulatory in the deſart. Now how could ſuch a ſingular deſign, as *Moſes* deſcribes in his law, be put in execution by any other than by him that formed it. It was *Joſhua* that made this conqueſt of the land of *Canaan*, and poſſeſt the *Jews* of it; now, to be ſure if that people had not been then fully perſwaded of the Divine authority of *Moſes*'s law, they would never have failed after ſo great an alteration to make uſe of their power and liberty in throwing off the troubleſom yoak of his laws; nor yet would *Joſhua* and all his ſucceſſors in the government, ever have maintain'd the authority of thoſe laws, if they had not lookt upon *Moſes*, not only as an extraordinary man, but alſo as one particularly commiſſionated by God to make that body of laws, for the regulating of his people.

We read in thoſe books of *Moſes*'s dying in the mountains of *Moab*; now that being ſuppoſed, how is it poſſible, that if the people of *Iſrael* had not been fully convinced that God himſelf gave their law to *Moſes* with all the circumſtances mentioned by him, they would have continued to keep up ſuch a ridiculous and ill grounded conceit. If he had really by his tyrannical authority forced the *Iſraelites* into a compliance to his laws during his life, why did they not aſſoon as he was dead, with the fear of his authority ſhake off the yoak of his laws, and all reſpect for his memory.

One thing we may remark as very ſurprizing in the relation of that legiſlator's death; which is that his body was not found after his death.

For we do not ſee that that people, which otherwiſe kept up and carried about with ſo much care, the bones of *Joſeph* and his brethren, in order to bury, and depoſite them in the ſepulchres of their anceſtors (for both *Joſeph* and his brethren were interred in *Judæa*) did ever build a tomb to their law-giver, or ſo much as pretend to ſhew his ſepulchre.

Joſephus was of opinion, that *Moſes* wrote himſelf, the account of his own death, for fear the *Jews* ſhould ever imagine, and ſo give out that God had taken him up into heaven. I ſee, I confeſs, no ſolidity in that conjecture of his, but yet it may give us occaſion to make a reflexion hereupon, I think, more natural and eaſie, which is, that God had a mind, as *Joſhua* intimates it, to confirm the many characters of divinity that appeared in the law of *Moſes*, by taking away from before the eyes of the *Jews* his corps, which they would certainly, if they had not been ſo prevented, have kept with more care than thoſe of all their patriarchs and kings. The deſcription of the manner of *Moſes*'s death, ſhews evidently, that he was not only in great eſteem during his life, but that

even

even his death did much conduce to the increaſe of it, and to make men look upon him, as one glorioufly raiſed up above the common condition of men, and in a manner not obnoxious to the infirmities and miſeries incident to human nature. But after theſe general reflexions, I muſt come to thoſe that are more particular.

CHAP. III.

That the Truth of the Miracles related by MOSES, *cannot reaſonably be doubted of.*

WHOEVER will examine with attention, the four laſt books of *Moſes*, ſhall find in them ſeveral paſſages recorded, which deſerve a particular conſideration.

As firſt of all, the miraculous birth, the extraordinary education, the heroical courage, and the Divine call and commiſſion of *Moſes*, and the ſeveral miracles which he wrought in *Egypt*, to bring the *Iſraelites* out of it, and lead them to the borders of *Canaan*.

Then ſecondly, all the moral, ceremonial, and political laws which *Moſes* gave to that people, from God.

And laſtly, *Moſes* his prophecies concerning their future condition, their victories, their captivities, their tranſportations, concerning the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, the coming of the *Meſſiah*, and the diſperſion of their whole nation.

All which paſſages have as evident and authentick proofs of their certainty, as things of that nature are capable of.

Let us firſt begin with the narration of the miracles recorded in the beginning of *Exodus*.

Wherein we ſee, that after *Moſes* had repreſented the death of *Joſeph*, and of all the generation, that came down with *Jacob* into *Egypt*, he writes his own hiſtory, and repreſents himſelf as another *Noah*, ſaved out of the waters, to ſave and deliver that holy family.

The whole relation which he makes of all thoſe particulars, is very ſtrange, and extraordinary; but yet his circumciſion, and the inſtruction of his mother, to whom he was given, by the daughter of *Pharaoh* to be nurſt up, and the converſation of that princeſs who had adopted him, and made her ſelf a proſelyte as the *Jews* endeavour to prove, from 1 *Chron.* IV. 18. (*q*). And his education in the court of *Egypt*, and his acquaintance with all the grandees of that court, did concur together to acquaint him with that remarkable preſervation of his perſon, and perſwade him of the certainty of it.

For how could either *Moſes* impoſe, or be impoſed upon in that matter? Was not that barbarous cruelty of the *Egyptians* by which they compell'd the *Jews* about the time of *Moſes*'s birth, to throw their children

(*q*) *Jalk.* in h. l. *ex Vajikra Rab.*

dren into the river *Nilus*, notoriously known of all men? Were not the publick buildings, and ſtrong cities, *viz. Pythom*, and *Rameſes*, ſo call'd from the name of king *Rameſes Miamum*, ſtanding in the ſight of all men? And was it not publickly known by all the world, that the poor *Iſraelites* were the ſlaves and drudges who were made uſe of to erect thoſe buildings.

Neither could the manner of his education be unknown to him, nor yet to any of the *Hebrews*, for we do not join here to *Moſes*'s narration, what *Joſephus* relates of his perſon, of his feats in *Meroe*, and of his marrying an *Æthiopian* princeſs, *&c.*

As *Moſes*'s miracles were done in the preſence of the *Egyptians* and *Jews*, ſo they teſtifie, that he had really received his calling, and commiſſion from God in the deſert, and that juſt in the manner as he deſcribes it himſelf.

Now, no man can diſpute the truth of thoſe miracles, if he but minds the following conſiderations.

Firſt, it cannot be denied, that the people of *Iſrael* was brought out of *Egypt* by *Moſes*. Their law, which the preſent *Jews* do ſtill obſerve, ſpeaks every where of that famous action of his; there was never any man diſputed the certainty of that atchievement. All ancient authors make mention of it, *Manethon* (*r*) gives an account of the time, of the manner, and of many other principal circumſtances of that exploit.

Trogus Pompeius, *Juſtinus*, and *Tacitus*, do alſo ſpeak of it, only *Tacitus* does groundleſly, I ſuppoſe, of his own head, relate, that the *Jews* were expell'd out of *Egypt*, becauſe of their leproſie: I ſay groundleſly, for it is known, that on the contrary, leproſie was a common diſtemper amongſt the *Egyptians*, and that they infected the *Iſraelites* with it, ſo that there is no likelihood they ſhould be expelled by the *Egyptians* for a diſtemper that they got from them.

We know beſides, that the law of *Moſes* which calls the leproſie the diſtemper of *Egypt*, did baniſh the lepers out of the congregation of the people; and then the nature of *David*'s curſes againſt *Joab*, becauſe of his murdering *Abner*, ſhews ſufficiently, that the leproſie was lookt upon by the *Jews*, as a diſtemper moſt commonly ſent immediately from God. Nay, *Trogus Pompeius* (*s*) himſelf, obſerves that the magicians cauſed *Moſes* with the people of *Iſrael* to be expell'd, becauſe they themſelves were ſtruck with a kind of ſcab and itch; and that they were afraid, leaſt the contagion of it ſhould infect the whole kingdom of *Egypt* (*t*).

And here I muſt not forget the mentioning the teſtimony of *Numenius* a *Pythagorean* philoſopher, who relates, that both *Jannes* and *Jambres* were choſen by the *Egyptians*, to oppoſe *Moſes*, and hinder the effects of his miracles and prayers, which had brought down many grievous plagues upon *Egypt*, juſt about the time of the *Jews* baniſhment out of that country.

But ſecondly, if the leproſie, which the *Iſraelites* brought from *Egypt*, be

(*r*) *Joſeph. contra App.* l. 1. (*s*) *Juſtin.* l. 36.
(*t*) *Euſeb. præp. Evang.* l. 9. c. 8.

be an indiſputable proof of their ſojourning there; it is as certain, that the going out of that mixed multitude of *Egyptians*, who ſo far eſpous'd the *Iſraelites* intereſt, as to leave and forſake *Egypt* their own countrey to accompany them, could have no other cauſe or pretence than the miracles of *Moſes*, whereof, they had been eye-witneſſes; ſo that the poſterity of thoſe *Egyptians* that were thus incorporated into the body of the people of *Iſrael*, were in after ages, as ſo many witneſſes of the truth of thoſe miracles, which formerly perſwaded their fathers to joyn with *Moſes*, and ſo to ſhare fortune with the *Hebrews*.

Thirdly, it is certain, that the *Jews* could not ſo much as mention any of the miracles, which they pretended were done formerly for the deliverance of their fathers, without expoſing themſelves to the ſcorn of all the world, if all thoſe miracles, and their deliverance, had not been certainly and generally known to the *Egyptians*, and to all the neighbouring nations, by whom they were often ſubdued and brought into ſubjection after the deceaſe of *Moſes*, and *Joſhuah*.

To all theſe reflexions we may add, that the commemoration of the *Iſraelites* going out of *Egypt*, with all the miracles wrought by *Moſes*, was renew'd yearly, not only by the ſolemnizing the feaſt of the paſſover, which the *Iſraelites* did conſtantly keep to the time of their diſperſion, and which they do ſtill keep in all parts of the world, but alſo by two other very ſenſible ways.

The firſt whereof, was the ſeparation which God made of the tribe of *Levi*, in order to conſecrate it to his ſervice, inſtead of the firſt-born of the people of *Iſrael*, whom he had ſpared, and preſerved in *Egypt*, with great ſolemnity, in regard both of men and beaſts, as we read, *Numb.* III. ſo that every *Levite* was as a living memorial of that great miracle, wrought at the *Iſraelites* going forth out of *Egypt*.

And the ſecond was the law concerning the redemption of every firſt-born, both of men, and unclean beaſts (*u*); which is obſerved to this hour amongſt the *Jews*: it is clear, and evident, that there is in all thoſe laws, a deep impreſſion of thoſe ſeveral great miracles which compell'd *Pharaoh* to let the *Iſraelites* go.

Laſtly, it is very obſervable here, that the memory of the deliverance of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, wrought, as by many miracles, ſo eſpecially by the death of all the firſt-born of *Egypt*, which was the occaſion of the inſtitution of the paſſover continued amongſt the *Egyptians* till after Jeſus Chriſt: for till then they uſed to mark with red their ſheep, their trees, their houſes, and lands, the day before the paſſover, as one may ſee in *Epiphanius*; which cuſtom could proceed from no other cauſe, than from the *Egyptians* fear of the like plague and mortality, that was once inflicted upon their forefathers; and from their hope of preventing it by ſuch a kind of taliſman, whereby they thought *Moſes* had formerly ſaved the *Iſraelites* harmleſs from that great plague, only by ſprinkling the blood of the lamb of the paſſover, on the upper door poſt of their houſes,

(*u*) Numb. xviii. 16.

CHAP. IV.

A Continuation of the Proofs of the Truth of the Miracles wrought by Moses.

THESE arguments might be thought ſufficient for the evincing the truth of theſe miracles which *Moſes* relates; but yet ſomething more may be added.

As thoſe ſtupendious miracles, by which the famous deliverance of the *Iſraelites* was effected, could not be doubted of, by thoſe who had been eye-witneſſes of them; ſo they were afterwards confirmed by ſeveral other miracles, which being as great, and almoſt of the ſame kind, continued for many years in the ſight of the whole people of *Iſrael*.

God made a pillar of fire, and of a cloud, attend upon the *Iſraelites*, to guide them, the one by day, and the other by night. He divided the red ſea to open a paſſage through it for his people, the memory whereof (ſaith *Euſebius*) was preſerved to his time, by thoſe of *Memphis* (*x*): the *Iſraelites* took the ſpoils of the *Egyptians* drown'd in the red ſea, as they were purſuing them: they made a ſong upon the occaſion of that wonderful deliverance; they were fed with *manna*, a kind of heavenly, and miraculous food; they drunk of that brook of water, that was following them wherever they went: all thoſe miracles, with many others, continued for forty years together without any interruption, and do therefore firmly eſtabliſh the truth of thoſe other miracles which *Moſes* relates, becauſe there were none of them wherein the people could be impoſed upon by any trick or illuſion, and of the truth whereof every one could not ſatisfie himſelf, by his own experience.

I do not ſpeak now of ſeveral publick monuments of thoſe miracles; as for example, the rod of *Aaron* which bloſſom'd in a night, the manna which was kept in the tabernacle. The brazen ſerpent, which having continued to *Hezekiah*'s time, was broken down by him, only becauſe the people offered incenſe to it.

From all which it muſt be acknowledged, that there was in the whole ſeries of the *Jewiſh* hiſtory both many pregnant evidences of the truth of the firſt miracles, and a conſtant ſeries of miracles which having been foretold by *Moſes*, did the better confirm the truth of thoſe which he relates as done by him on purpoſe to vindicate and defend the liberty, and honour of the people of *Iſrael*.

Becauſe I did juſt now intimate, that the memory of the *Jewiſh* deliverance, did continue for many ages after amongſt the *Egyptians*: I think myſelf obliged to add here, ſome arguments to prove, that neither ſuch a tranſaction as that was, nor yet any of the like nature and importance, could ever be forgotten in the land of *Canaan*.

There is nothing that in outward appearance ſeems more ridiculous, than what is related concerning the *Gibeonites* coming to *Joſhuah*'s camp; their equipage ſhew'd that they had a mind to perſwade the *Iſraelites* that they

(*x*) L. 9. *præp. Ev. cap. ult.*

they came from a far countrey. The treaty which they extorted from *Joſhuah* by fraud, is very ſingular.

And there can be nothing more remarkable, than their ſubſiſtence amongſt the people of *Iſrael*, notwithſtanding that they were of the number of thoſe nations, which God had commanded to be deſtroy'd; and their being deſtined by *Joſhuah*'s appointment, to carry the wood and the water, neceſſary for the ſervice of the tabernacle, from whence they were denominated *Nethinims*, and thereby for ever after diſtinguiſh'd from the *Iſraelites*.

But after all, there could be nothing more agreeable to God's wiſdom, than the preſervation of that people amongſt the *Iſraelites*. Their fathers were the witneſſes of *Moſes* and *Joſhuah*'s miracles. Thoſe miracles obliged them to ſeek the alliance of the *Hebrews*, and to cheat them into it by a fraudulent treaty, becauſe they deſpaired of compaſſing their deſign by any other means. Therefore their ſubſiſting amongſt the *Jews*, and their ſervile office which expoſed them to the eyes of the whole nation, could not chuſe but be of an extraordinary uſe, to make that people preſerve, and cheriſh up the memory of thoſe glorious actions, which every *Gibeonite* had perpetually before his eyes.

The ſame remark may be made upon the continuing of *Rahab*'s family amongſt the *Iſraelites*, after the deſtruction of *Jericho*.

It is certain, that the *Jews* have always believed, that beſides thoſe firſt miracles related by *Moſes*, many others have been done ſince for their ſakes, both to poſſeſs them of the land of *Canaan*, and to keep or reſtore them to the poſſeſſion of it; nay, of thoſe latter miracles many are very like unto the former: as for example, the death of 185000 men in the army of *Sennacherib*; the returning of the ſhadow backwards ten degrees upon the ſundial of *Ahaz*; the wonderful preſervation of the whole nation, by the means of *Eſther*, which was the occaſion of the inſtitution of the feaſt of *Purim* amongſt them, and ſeveral other miraculous tranſactions related in the *Jewiſh* authors, of which I will only name three, which did preſerve the memory of the greateſt, and moſt important miracles related by *Moſes*.

The firſt is the continual miracle of the *Urim* and *Thummim* of the high-prieſt, which by its frequency, did confirm the truth of *Moſes*'s relation, concerning the ſeveral apparitions of God, in order to lead his people, and to give them laws.

The ſecond is the miracle of every ſeventh year (*y*), during which, though the people of *Iſrael* did neither ſow nor reap, God, according to his promiſe, did ſupply them with plenty of proviſions, by making every ſixth year extraordinarily plentiful. Now this miracle was a kind of a memorial of that other great miracle, whereby God did feed his people with manna, for forty years together in the deſart, ſtill doubling the proportion of manna every ſixth day.

In effect, as that law which commanded a ſabbath of reſt unto the land every ſeventh year, was conſtantly obſerved, which would never have been done long, if that people had not always been fully convinced by their own experience of its divinity.

And again, as that miracle was ſo publickly known, that God by his Prophets

(*y*) Levit. xxv.

Prophets did often threaten the *Jews* to deprive them of the fertility of the ſixth year, becauſe of their tranſgreſſing the ſabbath.

So it is plain, that no man can reaſonably doubt, or diſpute the truth of that continual miracle, which that law both ſuppoſeth and promiſeth.

The third is the miracle of a continual protection during the time of thoſe three great ſolemn feaſts, in which the people were obliged by God's command to attend his ſervice in the tabernacle, or at *Jeruſalem*. For this law requiring attendance from all the *Jews* of the age of twenty and upwards, it engaged them to leave the frontiers of their countrey naked, and deſtitute of men, and ſo expoſed to the inroads of their enemies; but at the ſame time it gave them occaſion to experience the ſame Divine protection, which, as they read in *Moſes*'s writings, their fathers had formerly ſo often experienced againſt all their enemies.

It is certain, that there was never any commonwealth in the world, which had any ſuch fundamental law, the danger to which a countrey is expoſed by the obſervation of it is too viſible not to be avoided. Therefore the *Jews* to be ſure, would never have acknowledged that law to be Divine, nor yet ſubmitted to it, if they had not been ſecure of God's protection to prevent all the miſchiefs, and inconveniences that might ariſe from their obſervation of that law; ſo that ſuppoſe they had been at firſt ſo ſtupid and unwary as to receive it from *Moſes*, yet they would never have obſerved it ſo conſtantly and ſo long, if they had not had a conſtant trial of God's protection on all occaſions; and if they had not lookt upon it as a neceſſary conſequence, and accompliſhment of thoſe promiſes, which he had made both to them and their fathers.

However, it is certain, that it was the will of God, that the *Jews* ſhould altogether rely upon that miraculous protection of his: nay, the diſtruſting of it, was ſo offenſive to him, that he inflicted an exemplary puniſhment upon *David*, for an action, which though innocent of it ſelf in a prince, did yet directly contradict that truſt which the *Iſraelites* were bound to ſet upon God's protection. For when *David* cauſed the people to be numbered, God ſent a peſtilence amongſt his people, which abated his pride, and thus taught him effectually to rely more upon God for the future, than upon the multitude of his people.

CHAP. V.

That MOSES's *Deſcription of the Manner of God's giving him his Laws, is evidently true.*

IT is alſo equally eaſie to ſhew the truth of *Moſes*'s deſcription of the manner of the promulgation of God's law in the deſert, and of the ſeveral parts of it, moral, political, ceremonial.

I ſhall not ſtand to conſider here the admirable equity, and moſt abſolute perfection of the moral law, and ſhew that it could have no other

author

author but God alone: neither will I urge in this place, the extraordinary care God had to regulate the moſt minute ceremonies, that there might be nothing left undetermined in all the acts of religion; as alſo the great, and Divine wiſdom that is diſcernible in all thoſe ceremonial laws, which beſides their uſeful oppoſition, to the then *Pagan* cuſtoms, do moſt of them, either mind men of their duty, or repreſent and typifie the things that were to come to paſs under the Goſpel.

In ſhort, I will not aggravate any farther the conſideration of the admirable wiſdom that appears every where in the whole body of the political laws which God gave to the *Jews* to ſettle them into a firm and ſolid form of government; that wiſdom is ſuch, and ſo viſible, that it plainly demonſtrates the divinity of them to any man that will but compare the whole body of them, and their abſolute perfection, with the defects of all human laws, and the ſeveral changes and alterations they have received from time to time.

But I ſhall lay aſide theſe remarks, and chuſe to come to thoſe that do not require ſo much learning, nor ſo great an intention of thought.

The firſt of which is, that the moral law was given in the ſight and hearing of all the people of *Iſrael*, and that the promulgation of it upon mount *Sinai*, was accompanied with extraordinary marks of glory, and made only after many previous purifications preſcribed to the whole congregation in order to receive it.

It is true indeed, the ceremonial laws which were annexed to it, were not delivered to the people with ſo much pomp and majeſty; but as they were alſo given in the ſame deſert, and in the preſence of the elders of the people aſſembled together near the tabernacle, after they had earneſtly intreated *Moſes*, that God would no more ſpeak to them himſelf, it is evident, that they are no leſs authentick than the moral law, therefore we ſee that they were accordingly received by that people, notwithſtanding the troubles, expences, avocations, ſtraights, and hardſhips, which they might meet with by it.

Now is it in the leaſt probable, that if this people had not been convinced, that *Moſes* did really familiarly converſe with God for forty days and forty nights upon mount *Sinai*, they would fooliſhly without any cauſe, of a ſuddain, have ſubmitted to ſuch a troubleſom yoke of laws, many whereof were oppoſite both to their opinions and ancient cuſtoms.

It is well known for example, what jealouſie there was all along amongſt the tribes of *Iſrael*, even from the time of their anceſtors, yet we do not ſee that in thoſe laws there is any notice taken of it, or regard had to it, but that on the contrary they ſeem to foment that ſpirit of diviſion, when they deprive *Reuben* of his birthright, in favour of *Joſeph*'s poſterity, and of the prieſthood in favour of *Levi*, and of the kingdom, in favour of *Juda*.

Nay, we ſee, that even after *Moſes* had compoſed the difference that was once betwixt the tribe of *Levi*, and the followers of *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, they were hardly brought to acquieſce to his deciſion; and how could he then poſſibly have raiſed his own tribe, the tribe of *Levi*, to ſuch prerogatives, and to ſuch a plentiful condition above all the other tribes, as he did by aſſigning the firſt fruits and offerings to the Levites

and

and priests. How could he, I say, have done that without meeting with some opposition from the rest of the people, except they had all been convinced by the miracle that God wrought to decide that question, when it was disputed, that he himself was the author of that constitution.

Thus we read, that long after, when king *Uzziah* boldly presumed, to act against *Moses*'s law, *Numb.* XXV. and to assume to himself the dignity of priesthood, and to do the functions of it; he presently received the punishment due to his presumption: so that being struck with a suddain leprosie, he was confined to his dying day. Is it any ways probable that a prince, especially of his temper, would have submitted to such a confinement, and meekly resign'd his crown to his son, if that punishment inflicted upon him, had not fully convinced him of the divinity of that law, which he had transgressed and violated by his temerity and presumption.

The third reflexion is, that the greatest part of those laws being intended by God to inspire his people with an irreconcileable aversion against all those nations, amongst whom they were going to settle; they were so framed, as not only to be opposite to the laws and customs of *Egypt*, from whence they came, but also to those received amongst the *Hivites*, *Amorits*, and other nations, of whose countries they were going to possess themselves.

Thus we find in the XVIII. of *Leviticus*, laws against all incestuous marriages, which without doubt, were ordinary amongst the *Canaanites*, and *Egyptians*, who therein follow'd the examples of the ancient Patriarchs, who married within those forbidden degrees; there we find also the sacrifices to *Moloch* forbidden, the practice whereof, those nations, in all likelihood, defended by the example of *Abraham*'s sacrifice.

Now it cannot reasonably be thought, that a whole nation would of a suddain receive such laws as deprived them of a liberty and freedom they had always hitherto enjoyed, and condemn of their own accord, those sacrifices that had the fairest pretence of religion imaginable, and to use many ceremonies contrary to those received amongst them, if they had not had a strong, and extraordinary motive for so doing.

There is another thing besides, that challenges our consideration, *viz.* the exact description which God gave to *Moses* of the tabernacle, of the several parts of the ceremonial worship, which was to be performed in that sacred place, and of the manner how this tabernacle with all its appurtenances, utensils, and ornaments, was finished.

For as this tabernacle was then the centre of the whole *Jewish* religion, (as the temple was afterwards by succeeding to it) so it was a solemn proof of the divinity of *Moses*'s laws, and of the worship that was performed there.

Is it conceivable, that a whole nation should contribute to the building of it, should see it consecrated, and taken to pieces, and set together again every day, and should read all the particulars relating to its construction, and not discern whether there was any truth and reality in all that was told them concerning the religion which their governour fixed in that place wherein he pretended many revelations were made.

CHAP. VI.

CHAP. VI.

Some other Proofs that confirm Moses's *Deſcription of the Manner how the Law was given and promulgated.*

BUT if it is ſo eaſie to eſtabliſh the divinity of the Law of *Moſes*, by ſhewing the truth of the matter of fact, according to the manner of God's promulgation, as *Moſes* relates it, we may further collect the truth of it, by joyning theſe following reflexions to thoſe already made in the foregoing chapters.

Certainly if *Moſes* had been the firſt founder of a kingdom, and had been ſucceeded in it by his own children and poſterity for many generations one after another; we might perhaps, have had ſome ground to ſuſpect, that his ſucceſſors, conſulting their own intereſt and honour, would have been very glad to perſwade their ſubjects, that the firſt founder of their kingdom, had ſome communication with God, and that it was from him he received the laws and conſtitutions which he gave them concerning civil and religious matters.

But it is obſervable, that *Moſes* was ſo far from inveſting his own children with the ſupream authority after himſelf, that he tranſlated it into another tribe, and conſtituted *Joſhuah* of the tribe of *Ephraim* for his ſucceſſor in the government; as for his poſterity he took little care of it, but reduced it to a rank inferiour to that of *Aaron*'s family, which he preferr'd to the moſt honourable functions of the prieſthood; leaving to his own the meaneſt, and moſt inconſiderable employments; all which ſhews evidently that none of thoſe who came after *Moſes* were moved by any private intereſt of their own, to defend the truth and authority of his laws and writings, but only by the certain knowledge they had, that they were all divine.

Neither ought we to omit to conſider here the manner how *Moſes* decides beforehand ſuch queſtions, and determines ſuch controverſies, as could not be raiſed, but after the conqueſt of *Canaan*, which was made by his ſucceſſor only after his death. And how thoſe laws were conſtantly obſerved in all the ſucceeding generations of that people, and ſubmitted unto by the very judges and kings themſelves; tho' there be nothing more common than for a conqueror, ſuch as *Joſhua* was, to admit of no other fundamental laws in that ſtate he is the founder of, than thoſe which he is the author of; nothing is more uſual, than for ſtateſmen to affect the expoſing the conduct of their predeceſſors, eſpecially when the form of government is altered, and from democratical, or ariſtocratical, is changed into monarchical, as it happened amongſt the *Iſraelites*. How then could *Moſes*'s laws ſtill keep up their authority in all changes and revolutions? How comes it to paſs, that in all the ſucceſſions of judges and kings, there was never any of them attempted to ſuſpend, or annul *Moſes*'s laws, much leſs to enact and give any others contrary to them?

Again, how came it to paſs, that in all the diviſions and factions that nation

nation fell into, there was never any *Jew*, endeavour'd with any ſucceſs, to undeceive the reſt of his own people, ſo as to make them ſhake off the troubleſom yoke of *Moſes*'s laws. No doubt only, becauſe the generality of that nation never diſputed the Divine origin and authority of them.

It were an eaſie thing to demonſtrate by the whole ſeries, of the *Jewiſh* hiſtory, that all thoſe laws which in *Moſes*'s writings are inlay'd one within another, and repreſented as occaſion'd by ſeveral tranſactions related there, have all been equally received of the *Jews*, and have all been put together in a body by themſelves before *Moſes*'s death, as it may be proved out of the XXXI. of *Deuteronomy*.

It appears, that thoſe laws were publick, and in great eſteem amongſt that people, to whom God gave them, upon whom he laid an indiſpenſable obligation to read them every day, and to conſult them upon every emergent buſineſs.

It appears, that they were known equally of all degrees of men, ſexes, and ages, which were all obliged to pay obedience to them upon pain of death.

It appears, that thoſe laws were not only publickly kept in the tabernacle, but alſo privately read in every family.

We ſee, that a whole tribe, *viz.* the tribe of *Levi* was appointed by God to explain them, and in order to that they were diſperſed throughout the whole land of *Canaan*, and exempted from the cares and troubles that neceſſarily attend huſbandry, by the plentiful proviſion of tithes and offerings that was allotted to them.

We ſee that God obliged all *Jews* to read and meditate upon them continually, eſpecially every ſabbath day.

Nay, and we ſee moreover, that God every ſeventh year would have them read publicly in a more ſolemn manner, before the whole congregation of that people, who during that year, were obliged to reſt from all their ordinary labours and employments, and ſo had nothing elſe to do all that while, but to read the law, to examine it, and to meditate upon it.

Laſtly, it appears, that thoſe laws were yet the more ſolemn and authentick, becauſe they obliged the *Jews* to celebrate three ſuch feaſts as were to be publickly kept by the whole nation, and conſequently apt to refreſh their memories, and put them in mind, thrice a year, not only of the ſurpriſing miracles that God had done for them; but alſo of the manner how he gave and promulgated his laws; the miracles giving riſe to the laws, and thoſe laws being themſelves a means of preſerving the memory of thoſe miracles, becauſe of the frequent commemoration of them which was therein enjoyned.

Now theſe things being ſo, let every one judge, whether the truth of *Moſes*'s account of God's giving, and promulgating by his means that body of laws which he hath inſerted in *Exodus*, and the following books, can poſſibly, or at leaſt, reaſonably be diſputed, or doubted of. But I come now to conſider the oracles recorded in *Moſes*'s writings in order to demonſtrate the truth and divinity of them.

CHAP. VII.

CHAP. VII.

That there is no juſt Exception can be made againſt Moses's *Hiſtory, in what relates to the Oracles, which he hath recorded in his Books.*

THERE are ſeveral ſorts of Oracles in *Exodus*, and the other three following Books.

First, there are ſome whereof the accompliſhment did ſoon follow the prediction.

The deliverance of the *Jews* out of the *Egyptian* bondage is of that number; *Moſes* does promiſe and foretel it; nay, and he executed it himſelf: and all the people to whom it was promiſed and foretold, were themſelves witneſſes of the accompliſhment of that propheſie; and it was that accompliſhment which eſtabliſhed the divinity of his commiſſion.

So is the other propheſie concerning the conqueſt of the land of *Canaan*, and the ſeveral diviſions that were to be made of it amongſt all the tribes of *Iſrael*, *Moſes* foretelling exactly what lot every one ſhould have, and giving beſides, a deſcription of the countrey that every tribe was to inhabit.

Thoſe that were born in the deſert, were witneſſes both of the prediction, and the execution of it, altho' it was by the caſting of lots, that all the tribes got their ſeveral partitions.

But ſecondly, there are ſome other oracles in *Moſes*'s books, the accompliſhment whereof was not to follow the prediction till after a long interval of time.

Such are the propheſies that foretel the future ſubjection of the *Iſraelites* to the *Canaanites*, and the ſeveral deliverances out of that ſubjection, which God was to effect by the hands of *judges*, whom he was to raiſe up for that purpoſe.

Such again are the propheſies which relate to the future change of their common wealth into a kingly government.

Thirdly and laſtly, we ſee that *Moſes* foretells all the accidents, changes, and revolutions that were to befal the *Jews* as long as their ſtate ſhould ſtand: at leaſt, we ſee that his predictions are very plain, concerning their ſeveral captivities, and removals, and their return into the holy land; as alſo the ſieges of *Samaria* and *Jeruſalem*; and the irrecoverable diſperſion of the whole nation, which we ſee at preſent.

But whatever difference there may otherwiſe be, betwixt all theſe predictions, we may ſay, that every one of them, hath as pregnant proofs of its certainty and truth, as any thing of that nature is capable of.

For firſt, as to the firſt ſort of predictions, the accompliſhment whereof, *Moſes* relates himſelf,

It plainly appears, that his account, cannot in the leaſt be ſuſpected of impoſture; becauſe he wrote it amongſt a whole nation, which could not poſſibly be impoſed upon in that caſe, ſeeing he ſuppoſes, and takes it for granted, all along in his relation, that thoſe predictions were beforehand publickly and generally known of all the people.

As

As for the accompliſhment of the ſecond ſort of propheſies, we have the relation of it in ſuch other books as were written after *Moſes*'s death; as in the books of *Joſhua*, of *Judges*, and ſeveral others, which relate the accompliſhment of them, as of propheſies written many years, and even ſome ages before, by *Moſes*.

Beſides, to this we may add, that the account which we find in thoſe books, concerning the accompliſhment of *Moſes*'s propheſies, is interwoven with ſuch hiſtories, as ſuppoſe, without any affectation, that his propheſies, as well as his writings, were in the hands of all the world, and diſtinctly known by every *Jew*.

And what is further obſervable, is, that the *Jews* have always had *Moſes*'s books in ſuch an eſteem, becauſe of theſe ſeveral illuſtrious propheſies that are contained in them, that they have always lookt upon him as the moſt excellent of all their prophets. They aſſert at this very day, that the other prophets had commonly no other knowledge of future events than that which was communicated to them by dreams and viſions; whereas *Moſes* had it by an immediate revelation of God himſelf, who uſed to ſpeak to him face to face, without any enthuſiaſm when he was perfectly awake.

Now, how could ever the *Jews* have been ſo ſtrongly prepoſſeſt of that high opinion both of *Moſes*, and his predictions, if we ſuppoſe, that they never ſaw the accompliſhment of any of them?

That would certainly be as ſtrange an illuſion as ever was: for it is beſides obſervable, that thoſe propheſies of his, were not written by themſelves and kept ſecret from the generality of the people; but that they were inſerted into the ſeveral ſpeeches which he made to all the people ſome time before his death; and which are written, and kept together in the ſame volume, to be a ſtanding monument, both of his propheſies, and of his miniſtry among the *Jews*.

Now there is a vaſt difference betwixt a book that is all made up of propheſies, and ſo kept ſecret, and ſeldom read, as the books of the Sybils were; and a book wherein the propheſies it contains, are interwoven with a hiſtory, wherein there is ſo great a variety of matters, as draws to it, and fixes the attention of every reader; and wherein they are mingled with a whole body of political and ceremonial laws; and intermixed with the accounts which *Moſes* gives of all the great tranſactions which gave the occaſion to ſo many ſeveral revelations and propheſies recorded in his books.

I am perſwaded, that it is impoſſible for any man to make thoſe reflexions upon the opinion which the *Jews* entertained of *Moſes*'s prerogative, and upon the manner that his propheſies, ſo much reverenced amongſt them, were exactly accompliſhed, and not be convinced of their Divine authority.

CHAP. VIII.

That the Teſtimony of the Jews, *is a conſtant Proof of the Truth of the Oracles related by* Moses.

BUT leaſt any body ſhould think it ſtrange, that I ſhould build the truth of *Moſes*'s prophecies, upon the teſtimony of the *Jews*, I will reſtrain its authority of it within juſt, and certain bounds.

Firſt, although the *Jews* bear witneſs in their ſacred books, that the greateſt part of *Moſes*'s prophecies are already fulfill'd, yet they ſay ſome are not: as for inſtance thoſe which relate to the Meſſiah's coming. But their obſtinate blindneſs, is not a juſt prejudice againſt ſuch an important truth, to be convinced of which, we need only to compare *Moſes*'s words, with the actions of Jeſus Chriſt.

Thus for what relates to the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, we need only compare *Moſes*'s propheſie of it, with the deſcription *Joſephus* their own hiſtorian, hath made of the ſame in his hiſtory of the ſiege and ruine of that city, and of the diſſipation of all the nations of the *Jews*.

But without the *Jews* teſtimony, in what regards the accompliſhment of thoſe propheſies, whereof the execution was deferred for a very long time, it is eaſie to convince any the moſt incredulous man of their truth and divinity, if he pleaſe but to make this one reflexion, which is, that when *Moſes* relates amongſt the oracles of the Patriarch *Jacob*, a particular propheſie concerning the Meſſiah's coming, and when he mentions that of *Balaam* concerning the riſing of that Divine ſtar, he ſubjoins alſo at the ſame time that concerning the vocation of the Gentiles to the faith, and brings it in as a certain ſign and conſequence of the Meſſiah's being come into the world.

Now if we examine the meaning of *Moſes*'s predictions, about the vocation of the Gentiles, which the Prophets that came after him did better explain and illuſtrate, we ſhall be apt from thence to conclude, that he in effect foretold, that God in the days of the Meſſiah would follow quite another method, than that which he had uſed before until the time of *Moſes*, *viz.*

That whereas God might ſeem to reſtrain then the privilege of his covenant, to one people alone; which was in effect to reſtrain the honour of the Meſſiah's birth, to one ſole nation of the world, to one ſole tribe of that nation, to one ſole family of that tribe, to one ſole branch of that family, and ſo to one ſole perſon of that branch: he would (after the Meſſiah's coming) take a contrary method, and call all men to ſalvation in him.

Now that being ſuppoſed, the truth of all *Moſes*'s propheſies cannot be queſtion'd. And whatever the *Jews* opinion be concerning the accompliſhment of ſome of them: it is ſufficient for us, that they have carefully and faithfully preſerved the books, wherein thoſe prophecies, which we ſee ſo exactly fulfilled, are contained.

For, we cannot reaſonably ſuſpect *Moſes*, or any other *Jew* of forging

the propheſies which foretold the calling of the Gentiles, not *Moſes*, ſeeing all his laws do tend (as I ſhall ſhew hereafter more at large) to eſtabliſh that reſtriction, I was juſt now ſpeaking of, which was to continue to the Meſſiah's coming. Not the *Jews*, ſeeing that none of them can ſtill endure to hear of the removal of that reſtriction, by the calling of the Gentiles; and that they are all poſſeſt with ſuch a ſpirit of envy and jealouſie againſt all other nations, that they perfectly hate and abominate them. But beſides, we cannot deſire a better, nor a more authentick accompliſhment of thoſe oracles, which are ſo oppoſite to the *Jewiſh* principles and prejudices, than that which we our ſelves are witneſſes of.

The ſame reflexion belongs to the other propheſies of *Moſes* concerning the total diſſipation of the *Jewiſh* ſtate; as alſo to the dreadful accompliſhment of them in our days. The moſt reſolved obſtinacy can ſuggeſt but one objection in this matter, which is, that either the Chriſtians, or the Jews have falſified *Moſes*'s writings, and inſerted thoſe propheſies, which we now find there, concerning the vocation of the Gentiles, and the diſperſion of the *Jews*, after thoſe things were come to paſs.

But firſt, the books of *Moſes*, which both Chriſtians and Jews have, are written in Hebrew, and penn'd in ſuch a ſtile as evidences their antiquity, and as would be inimitable now.

Secondly, that theſe books have been all tranſlated into Greek, almoſt 300 years before Jeſus Chriſt, and about 350 years before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. Neither the *Jews*, nor yet the Chriſtians were any longer ſole maſters of them, when the heathens had them alſo in their hands.

Beſides, thoſe who were converted to Chriſtianity from Judaiſm and Heatheniſm, did not only find theſe propheſies of *Moſes* in the hands of *Jews* and Heathens, long before the converſion of the Gentiles, and the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, but did alſo make uſe of them to evince againſt the *Jews*, that the Meſſiah was already come.

Thus, I think, I have ſufficiently demonſtrated the truth and divinity of all *Moſes*'s propheſies which we find in *Exodus* and the following books.

CHAP. IX.

That it appears by the Nature of his Relations, that Moses *had the Meſſias in View when he wrote the Book of* Genesis.

I HAVE ſhew'd in my former reflexions upon *Geneſis*, that thoſe who lived before *Moſes*'s time, had a diſtinct knowledge that God would certainly raiſe up a deliverer amongſt them, although they were not certain of the manner of his appearance. And I have

have beſides, I think, ſufficiently proved, that the various idea's which the ancients entertained of him upon the firſt promiſe made by God of his coming, were the occaſion of ſeveral criminal actions committed by the Patriarchs, and by thoſe of other nations, who had the ſame pretenſions with them.

I am now to prove that *Moſes* himſelf had the ſame knowledge, and lived in the ſame expectation with the ancients that preceded him. It is of more importance to be ſhewn, and that henceforth no body may wonder, if I pretend that the greateſt part of the laws he gave to the *Jews*, both in reference to civil and religious matters, and the greateſt part of his propheſies, as alſo thoſe others mentioned by Prophets that lived after him in that *Jewiſh* common-wealth, do all ſuppoſe a diſtinct relation to the promiſed Meſſiah.

And to make this evident, I beg leave to offer to the reader's conſideration ſome general reflexions upon *Moſes*'s hiſtory in *Geneſis*.

Firſt, it cannot be denied that *Moſes* was one of the greateſt and wiſeſt hiſtorians that ever was: there cannot be a greater deſign, nor a more difficult taſk than his was to write the hiſtory of 2400 years; he gives an account of the creation of the world in general; and in particular, of that of man, of his ſin, of the promiſe God made him after the fall, of the flood, of the original of all the nations that were in his time.

His way and manner of writing is alſo very extraordinary: the majeſty of his ſtile is tempered with an admirable plainneſs; he deſcribes all ſorts of paſſions to the life; he is admirable in his characters of the men he ſpeaks of, and of God himſelf. To be convinced of this, let any man read his deſcription of *Abraham*'s ſacrifice, and of the ſeveral paſſions *Joſeph* and his brethren were moved and affected with, when he made himſelf known to them. Beſides all that we may obſerve two very ſurprizing things in the book of *Geneſis*.

The firſt is, that *Moſes* recites there ſuch things as ſeem to be unworthy to be taken notice of, by ſo grave and wiſe a hiſtorian as he was: he gives for inſtance, an exact and particular account of all the circumſtances of *Abraham*'s purchaſe of the cave of *Machpela*, for a burying place for his wife: he ſets down all the particulars of the inceſt of *Judah* with *Thamar*; and he relates the manner how *Leah* with her ſons mandrakes obtained leave of *Rachel* to enjoy her huſband for one night, with a ſurprizing exactneſs.

The other is, that *Moſes* records a whole ſeries of horrible crimes, which ſeem to be as ſo many blemiſhes and odious reflexions upon the memory of thoſe whoſe hiſtory he writes.

Now it is not reaſonable to ſuppoſe that *Moſes* being ſo prudent, as he is confeſſed to be, could have been ſo injudicious, as to chuſe and pick out ſuch paſſages and actions as are in themſelves either trivial and of no moment, or horrible and odious, to fill up with them a book wherein he gives a deſcription of the creation of the world, where he ſets down the oracles of God at every turn.

It is natural therefore to judge, that he had ſome particular proſpect in his eyes, which could be no other than that of the *promiſe*, which alone juſtifies his recital of trivial things, and of crimes in ſuch a ſerious hiſtory as his is.

I ſhall not repeat here what I have already obſerved upon the crimes which he relates in *Geneſis*; I add only, that he had the ſame deſign and proſpect in his narration of ſuch ſmall and inconſiderable tranſactions.

Thus by his account of the purchaſe of the cave of *Machpelah*, his intention was to ſhew how God intended by this ſepulchre, to affix *Abraham* and his poſterity after him to the land of *Canaan:* his ſcope and proſpect was the ſame when he records the burial of *Rachel* at *Ephrathah*.

As for the crimes *Moſes* relates, I have before proved, that he deſign'd thereby to ſhew, how all the faithful before his time, had their minds altogether taken up with the thoughts and hopes of the accompliſhment of the promiſe: and herein we may ſay, the wiſdom of *Moſes* is very conſpicuous and diſcernable in the choice he made of thoſe actions to perpetuate the memory of the exceſſive deſire which the ancients had to accompliſh the promiſe.

And let no man object here, that it is very ſtrange to ſee, that during ſo many ages, the promiſe of the Meſſiah occaſioned no other than wicked actions. For as it appears by all circumſtances, that thoſe crimes related by *Moſes*, were committed in different times, and long after one another, ſo it is plain, that he hath recorded thoſe actions on purpoſe, to ſhew what impreſſion the true knowledge of the promiſe of the Meſſiah made upon the mind of thoſe that had it in its perfection and integrity.

If *Moſes* had inſerted in this book of *Geneſis*, any long diſcourſe as made by *Adam* about that matter upon a ſabbath day, or if he had given us a relation of what ſuch an one as *Seth*, or *Enoch*, or *Sem* uſed to teach concerning that promiſe in their religious aſſemblies.

It is certain, that beſides the inconvenience of a tedious repetition which he muſt have made of the ſame things in every particular account he gives of the ſeveral generations that preceded him, he could never have perſwaded his readers ſo well as he may do now.

Firſt, men would have been apt to ſuſpect, that thoſe ſpeeches upon the promiſe of the Meſſiah, were of his own making, and like thoſe ſet harangues we find in *Xenophon*, or *Livy*.

Secondly, the crimes that were committed, to get thereby ſome advantage: as for inſtance, the murder of a king committed by his heir, and ſucceſſor to the crown, ſhews in the murder a much greater ambition, and affectation of the throne; and ſuppoſes in him a diſtinct and clear knowledge of his rights and pretenſions to the empire.

CHAP. X.

CHAP. X.

That the ſame Perſwaſion appears throughout the whole Conduct of MOSES, *until his Death.*

BUT it is not only by thoſe and the like reflexions which may be made upon the choice, *Moſes* hath made of the things which he recites, that we may gather that he had always the promiſe of the Meſſiah in view; for he being deſcended from *Abraham*, there is no doubt, but that from his youth up, he was brought up in the religion, and conſequently in the hopes of that Patriarch.

But moreover we have reaſon to think, that the idea of this promiſe of the Meſſiah, was much more lively and ſtrong in that family, ever ſince *Jacob* on his death-bed had foretold, and promiſed to *Judah*, that it was out of his tribe he was to be born. As for *Joſeph*, to whom that promiſe might have been applied by the children of *Iſrael*, becauſe of his power and glory in *Egypt*; the *Egyptian* perſecution that followed ſometime after his deceaſe, reſolved all ſcruples and miſtakes that might otherwiſe have been entertained in that matter, and ſo convinced all thoſe poor ſufferers, that their Meſſiah was as yet to come.

To all theſe ſtrong preſumptions whereby we may gueſs, what the thoughts of *Moſes* might be, concerning the promiſe of the Meſſiah, we may add the conſideration both of his words and actions, which do very plainly eſtabliſh the ſame truth.

St. *Paul* in his epiſtle to the *Hebrews* (z), mentions two particular actions of *Moſes*, which, as they challenge our admiration, ſo they deſerve our ſerious conſideration, becauſe they clearly, I think, evidence, that *Moſes* was fully perſwaded of the future accompliſhment of that promiſe.

The firſt is, that he refuſed to be called the ſon of *Pharaoh*'s daughter, chuſing rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon, eſteeming the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures in *Egypt*, for he had reſpect unto the recompenſe of the reward. From whence could a reſolution ſo oppoſite to the ordinary prudence, and natural inclinations of other men proceed in him, if it was not, as St. *Paul* obſerves it, from a very extraordinary ſource, *viz.* from that ſtrong perſwaſion which he had, that how calamitous ſoever the then preſent condition of the people of God might be, yet God had choſen it therein to accompliſh that great promiſe which was the joy of all their anceſtors from *Adam* down to them, the remembrance whereof he renewed, by illuſtrating thoſe oracles which *Jacob* pronounced upon his death-bed.

The other is, that *Moſes* always adhered to that miſerable people, and ſtood by them in all their calamities and preſſures. 'Tis true, he left them, and retired once into *Midian* to ſave his life, and avoid the king's indignation, but he returned to them into *Egypt*, as ſoon as he had received

(z) Heb. xi.

ceived his commiſſion from God, to deliver them out of their miſery and bondage: now he ſhew'd again, by ſo doing, that he had a certain knowledge of that great promiſe of God made to that people, and a full aſſurance and perſwaſion of its future accompliſhment.

Moſes informs us indeed, how he refuſed at firſt the commiſſion God gave him to deliver his people from the *Egyptian* ſlavery, and how he excuſed himſelf upon his own incapacity, and being unfit for ſo great an undertaking: but yet he makes at the ſame time ſo viſible an alluſion to the propheſie concerning the *Shiloh* (*i. e.* ſent) *O my Lord*, (ſaid he, to God) *ſend, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt ſend*, that he could hardly expreſs and declare his mind about it more plainly.

But we ſhall be the better convinced of his alluſion to the ſending of the *Shiloh*; if we reflect upon *Moſes*'s being of the tribe of *Levi*, of which God had pronounced nothing concerning the future accompliſhment of the promiſe, he could not be ignorant of his being himſelf excluded of that privilege, and that after all, what glory ſoever the miraculous preſervation, and illuſtrious beginnings of his life, might ſeem to pretend and promiſe to him, yet he could not expect to riſe much higher than *Joſeph* had done before him, altho' he would reaſſume the former poſt, to which his adoption by *Pharaoh*'s daughter had once raiſed him.

We ſee that *Moſes* continued always of the ſame mind, and entertained ſtill the ſame notion, and hopes of the promiſe of the Meſſiah, even after God had revealed to him, that the time of his appearing into the world, was not yet come: this, I ſay, we ſee by his ſpeech to the people of *Iſrael*, related in the XVIII. Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, *The Lord thy God*, (ſaith he to them) *will raiſe up unto thee a Prophet from the midſt of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, unto him ye ſhall hearken*; he does not ſay a prieſt, or a king, though the Meſſiah was to be both; but he ſaith, a Prophet to teach them not to miſtake any of their prieſts or kings for the Meſſiah, but to expect and regard leſs in his perſon, the external honour of *Aaron*'s family, and the worldly grandeur of kings, than the priviledge of Divine inſpiration, which was abſolutely neceſſary to him as the founder of the true religion.

CHAP. XI.

That Balaam's *Propheſie, which* Moses *relates, is a further Argument of the ſame Perſwaſion in him.*

AS we ought to ſhew that *Moſes* had a very clear and diſtinct knowledge of this promiſe; ſo I think it will not be amiſs to make here a particular reflexion upon what he relates *Numb.* XXIII.

The *Moabites* being deſcended from *Lot*'s eldeſt daughter, it is very natural to conceive, that *Balac* their king was ſo deſirous to have the

Iſraelites

Iſraelites curſed from God, and by one of his prophets only, becauſe he deſign'd thereby to ſecure himſelf of the Divine bleſſing; or which is the ſame thing, of the priviledge of the accompliſhment of the promiſe, to which he thought he had a juſt claim and pretenſion by his being one of *Lot*'s poſterity.

And this obſervation upon *Balac*'s pretenſion and action, is the more juſt, and well grounded becauſe the notion of the curſe which he intended to have had pronounced againſt the *Iſraelites*, is directly oppoſite to the terms of the promiſe which God made to *Abraham*, *in thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed*, which words, as I obſerved before, do import a direct oppoſition, to *Lot*'s pretenſion.

Now all this being ſuppoſed, one needs only conſider the terms of the propheſie ſpoken by *Baldam* in favour of *Jacob*, to ſee that *Moſes* hath related it, only to ſhew,

Firſt, that altho' thoſe neighbouring nations to *Judea* had degenerated, and corrupted themſelves much by their communication with *Ham*'s poſterity, yet they preſerved a ſtrong, though confuſed notion of their anceſtors pretenſions, and acted according to that prejudice of theirs in all matters and occurrences of great moment.

Secondly, that it might be an authentick determination of all the ſeveral conteſts and pretenſions, which had divided the poſterity of *Terah* until that time.

It is like a definitive ſentence; firſt in favour of *Abraham* againſt the *Moabites*, and *Ammonites*, who were deſcended from *Lot*: ſecondly, in favour of *Iſaac*, againſt the pretenſion of the *Iſmaelites*, deſcended from *Iſmael*: thirdly, in favour of *Jacob*, againſt the pretenſion of the *Edomites*, deſcended from *Eſau*.

For when he foretels, that there ſhall come a ſtar out of *Jacob*; he decides the three forementioned controverſies. *Jacob* having been preferred to *Eſau*, *Iſaac* to *Iſmael*, and *Abraham* to *Lot*. Now *Jacob* could not be preferr'd to the *Moabites*, but he muſt be ſo too to the *Ammonites*, *Iſmaelites*, and *Edomites*.

This propheſie, as any one may ſee, is abſolutely neceſſary, becauſe it reſolves all the queſtions and controverſies, which did excite ſo many jealouſies amongſt all thoſe neighbouring nations.

This oracle of *Balaam* is yet the more remarkable, becauſe, that notwithſtanding it was pronounced at the entry into *Canaan*, the poſſeſſing and inhabiting of which countrey was one of the chiefeſt characters of the *Iſraelites* diſtinction from all other nations, yet in it *Balaam* makes a very diſtinct mention of the future calling of the Gentiles to the faith; he calls them the children of *Seth*, to intimate that in the time of the Meſſiah, the reſtriction made and obſerved by God before that time, was then to ceaſe, and that there ſhould be no more diſtinction betwixt the *Jews* and Gentiles, who were all the children of *Noah*, and all equally deſcended from *Seth* by him, becauſe then all nations were to be call'd to the communion of the *Meſſiah*.

I know that ſome by the children of *Seth* underſtand the inhabitants of a certain town in the countrey of *Moab*, mentioned in the XV. of *Iſaiah*, according to the Septuagint.

But the *Arabian* interpreter of the *Samaritans* (*a*), brings very good arguments to prove, that that place of Scripture is to be underſtood of the Meſſiah, and ſhews that he is call'd the head of the children of *Seth*, becauſe *Seth* was the head, and common father of all men ſince the flood, and at the ſame time of all the faithful before the flood; and that thoſe words of *Geneſis* IV. 26. *Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord*, relate to *Seth*, and not to *Enos*, as it is commonly believed.

Beſides, this propheſie by theſe words, *I ſhall ſee him, but not now. I ſhall behold him, but not nigh*, determines, that the birth of the *Meſſiah* was not near, but was reſerved for a further time.

Laſtly, it is a very ſingular thing, that this oracle ſhould be repreſented to us, as coming out of the mouth of a Prophet, who was choſen by God out of the family of *Abraham*; becauſe the author of it decides theſe important queſtions and differences, without any viſible partiality, and without being byaſſed by the pretenſions of his birth.

Now there are three things in it which clearly prove, that it could not be unknown to *Moſes*.

The firſt is, that immediately after this propheſie, which was as publick and well known amongſt the *Moabites*, as any propheſie could be; after the tedious preparation, and the many difficulties which *Balaam* made to come to *Balac*: after the many ceremonies and myſteries which he uſed upon that occaſion; and notwithſtanding the great and panick terror of the *Moabites*, at the approach of the *Iſraelites*: nay, and notwithſtanding the expreſs threats, and ominous propheſies of *Balaam* againſt that people; notwithſtanding all this, I ſay, we ſee the daughters of *Moab* imitating the carnal prudence of *Lot*'s daughters, and courting the alliance of the *Iſraelites*, as if they had had a mind to make themſelves amends in that way, for the loſs and wrong they had ſuffered by the ſentence which *Balaam* pronounced in favour of *Iſrael*.

We ſee, I ſay, that *Moſes* immediately after he had related the propheſies of *Balaam*, tells us, that the daughters of *Moab* invited the people of *Iſrael* to the ſacrifices of their gods, and that the people of *Iſrael* accepted of the invitation, and accordingly feaſted, and began then to defile themſelves with the daughters of *Moab*.

Now, that ſuch a thing ſhould happen preſently after *Balaam* had uttered his propheſie, ſhews evidently, that there was ſome relation betwixt thoſe two tranſactions. And this may be further made out, from the manner and nature of the puniſhment which God inflicted upon the *Iſraelites* for their criminal commerce with the *Moabites*, although the pretence of it might be grounded upon the deſign which the daughters of *Moab* had formed according to the principles of their education, to ſhare in the accompliſhment of the promiſe, by their conceiving and getting children by thoſe whom *Balaam*'s propheſie had inveſted with the right and priviledge of accompliſhing that promiſe.

The ſecond is, that accordingly about two hundred years after *Moſes*, we ſee that *Ruth* the *Moabiteſs* left her own country to ſettle and live at *Bethlehem*, and affected beſides to marry there again, one of the tribe of *Judah*, no doubt becauſe ſhe had got in her own country a certain knowledge

(*a*) *Abuſaid. M.S.* in the *French* king's library, note 4. upon Gen. iv, 24.

knowledge of that famous oracle, which afterwards made her eaſily yield to the counſels, and receive inſtructions both of her mother-in-law, and of her own huſband, who was of the tribe of *Judah*, and no doubt, had the books of *Moſes*, wherein were inſerted, both the propheſie of *Jacob* in favour of *Judah*, and that of *Balaam*, in favour of the *Iſraelites* againſt the *Moabites*.

The third is, that the *Jews* have now for ſeveral ages conſtantly maintained, that *Simei*'s curſes againſt *David* (*b*), which afterwards he called *maledictionem peſſimam*, קְלָלָה זָרָה contained an upbraiding reflexion as well upon the meanneſs of his birth, as being deſcended from a *Moabiteſs*, as upon his adultery, *&c.* This is related by St. *Jerome*, or ſome other ancient author, who writ that diſcourſe, *de traditionibus Hebræorum*, upon the ſecond chapter of the third book of *Kings*. This *Jewiſh* interpretation would be very probable, if that was but true what *Rabbi Salomon* ſaith upon the II. Chap. of the firſt book of *Kings*, *v.* 19. that when we read there, that *Solomon* cauſed a ſeat to be ſet for the king's mother, we ought to underſtand it of *Ruth* the *Moabiteſs*, and not of *Bathſheba*; we know the *Jews* aſcribe a much longer life to *Zarah* the daughter of *Aſher*, one of *Jacob*'s ſons, for they are ſtill of the ſame opinion as they were in St. *Hierome*'s time, that ſhe was yet alive in *David*'s time.

No body can condemn this reflexion upon *Ruth*, if he will but conſider, that her faith having been ſo rewarded, that the *Meſſiah* came out of her poſterity; ſhe is particularly made mention of in his genealogy; and that on the other hand her hiſtory hath been preſerved amongſt the other books of the Old Teſtament, as a kind of preſcription, not only againſt the *Moabites* pretenſions, long before condemned by *Balaam*'s propheſie, but alſo againſt thoſe of the *Iſmaelites*, and *Edomites* who had no better claim to the promiſe than the *Moabites*, having no other than that of a general call, and of their birthright before *Jacob*'s poſterity.

CHAP. XII.

That one may ſee alſo in MOSES's *Laws, plain Footſteps of God's Deſign, in diſtinguiſhing thoſe from whom he would have the Meſſiah to be born.*

IT was altogether neceſſary for the execution of my deſign, to eſtabliſh well, the authority of *Moſes*'s books, upon which I intend to make ſome reflexions: it was likewiſe neceſſary to ſhew, as I think I have done ſufficiently, that *Moſes* was perfectly acquainted with God's promiſe concerning the Meſſiah. Therefore, I believe, I may now come to ſhew, that both *Moſes*, and thoſe that came after him, had all an eye upon the Meſſiah in their chiefeſt regulations.

But to give a greater inſight, and underſtanding into the things that I am to ſay, I think it may not be amiſs, to remind the reader, and to lay before him once more, the ſeveral characters of God's conduct in that

(*b*) I Kings ii. 8.

that matter, that he may be the better able to judge of the whole ſeries of his deſign.

I have heretofore ſhew'd, that *Moſes*'s intention was to eſtabliſh two things in the book of *Geneſis*.

The one, that all men have derived their original from *Adam*, whom God created.

The other, that man having ſinned, God promiſed to reinſtate him by one of his own poſterity.

The firſt of theſe, was then ſolidly proved by a plain matter of fact, when I ſhew'd, that ſuch a tradition as *Moſes* relates about the creation of the world, cannot reaſonably be doubted of.

As for what concerns the other, *viz.* the promiſe of the Meſſiah, which was the chiefeſt object of man's hope and comfort: I have alſo ſhew'd, I think, that the notion, and expectation of it was very ſtrong and lively, and the original cauſe of all the extraordinary actions recorded by *Moſes*.

But as this promiſe was not to be fulfilled for many ages; ſo God made it only in very general terms, and had ſtill reſerved to himſelf the revelation for after ages, as he thought fit, both as to the manner and time of its accompliſhment. It is therefore abſolutely neceſſary that we ſhould conſider alſo how God preſerved all along the diſtinct knowledge of it amongſt men.

Now in reading my reflexions upon *Geneſis*, one muſt needs have obſerved that God, even in thoſe early times of the world, did reſtrain the priviledge of accompliſhing that promiſe by little and little to ſome particular men; till at laſt he openly declared, that he had ſetled it in the tribe of *Judah*; as we read it *Gen.* XLIX.

Thus we ſee, that God in the very beginning of the world reſtrained that prerogative to *Seth*'s family, and excluded *Cain*'s from it; then afterwards of all *Seth*'s family he reſtrained it to *Noah* alone and his family; then of *Noah*'s family to *Shem* alone; then afterwards of all *Shem*'s poſterity, to *Abraham* alone; then of *Abraham*'s ſons, to *Iſaac* alone; and of *Iſaac*'s, to *Jacob* alone; whoſe ſon *Judah* was alone inveſted with that priviledge, and all his brethren excluded.

It is moreover obſervable, that in thoſe ſeven forementioned reſtrictions which God made, he ſeems to have affected, to preſer the youngeſt to the eldeſt; as it is evident in his choice, if not of *Noah* and *Shem*, who was elder than the other ſons; yet certainly in that of *Seth*, who was younger than *Cain*; of *Abraham*, who was the youngeſt of *Terah*'s ſons; of *Iſaac* who was younger than *Iſmael*; of *Jacob* who was younger than *Eſau*; and of *Judah* who was one of the youngeſt of *Leah*'s ſons.

So likewiſe if the reader would judge of God's deſign, by the event alone, he might juſtly conclude, that God by this affected choice intended to raiſe continual jealouſies betwixt the eldeſt (who pretended that the priviledge of accompliſhing the promiſe, did belong to them becauſe of their birthright) againſt their youngeſt brothers, whom they ſaw preferred by God's immediate choice.

One may alſo further add, that God ſeems to have ſtrengthen'd theſe jealouſies, by introducing ſometimes a ſort of conformity amongſt the pretenders

pretenders to the execution of this promiſe: thus, for inſtance, as *Abraham* had two children, ſo *Lot* had two; as *Jacob* had twelve ſons, ſo *Eſau* alſo had twelve; and ſometimes one may find, that thoſe particular perſons who are preferred, are charged with very ſevere accuſations.

Now after all theſe general reflexions, it is natural for us to conſider, what care God hath upon all occaſions particularly taken, to diſtinguiſh and protect, thoſe whom he had inveſted with the right of accompliſhing the promiſe, that their ſtate and ſucceſſion might never be uncertain.

'Twas this deſign, no doubt, which obliged God to make *Seth* the depoſitary of his ſervice and worſhip, that he might thereby ſave *Noah* from the flood, and ſo procure to *Shem* his father's bleſſing.

'Twas for this reaſon that he call'd *Abraham* out of his own countrey, and made him travel from place to place to make him thereby famous in the world, and to invite men by that means to inquire after his profeſſion, his hopes, and his religion.

Again, it was for this, that he obliged this Patriarch to the practice of circumciſion, which was a real diſtinction, and an indelible character, and that he likewiſe confined him to a certain place, by fixing him in ſome ſort to the cave of *Machpela*, which he had purchaſed of the children of *Hamor*.

Laſtly, it was for that reaſon, that God would have the poſterity of *Jacob* diſtinguiſhed from all other nations of the world, and that he prohibited all alliance with them, as alſo all imitations of the cuſtoms, and religious ceremonies practiſed amongſt them.

Now all this being ſuppoſed, I ſay, that whether we conſider the end and principal deſign of *Moſes*'s laws, or whether we examine his ſeveral propheſies, which do particularly characterize the Meſſiah; we ſhall find that God did all along continue in his firſt deſign of diſtinction; and conſequently of keeping up the jealouſies of thoſe that had any pretenſions to the priviledge of accompliſhing the promiſe; or which is all one, that he hath proſecuted the ſame deſign to Jeſus Chriſt's time, in whom Chriſtians do maintain, that the firſt promiſe was accompliſhed, God having then, and not till then, both put an end to all thoſe differences and diſtinctions, which were only intended to make the Meſſiah the better known, and the more certainly diſcerned at his coming, and then to ceaſe; juſt as ſcaffolds are taken away as ſoon as the building is finiſhed: and having alſo on the other hand rectified the principles from which flowed that ſpirit of jealouſie, amongſt thoſe who had the ſame pretenſion.

We ſee, that accordingly God excluded all other nations from the right of accompliſhing this promiſe.

We ſee, that even in the family of *Judah*, who was himſelf the youngeſt of the firſt ſet of *Leah*'s children, he reſtrained the execution of it to the youngeſt brothers.

We ſee, that he raiſed occaſions of jealouſies, even amongſt the tribes of *Iſrael*.

In a word, we ſee, that of all thoſe means which can diſtinguiſh any one people from all other nations of the world, or one tribe from twelve, one family from all other families of the ſame tribe; and one particular perſon,

perſon, from all the reſt of his family, none were omitted, but (on the contrary) all made uſe of by God, to follow this his firſt deſign.

This I intend firmly to eſtabliſh, by examining the thing gradually from *Moſes*'s time, (by whoſe miniſtry God enacted, and publiſhed thoſe laws, by the means whereof, he intended the Meſſiah might certainly be known) to the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in whom we believe, that the promiſe was accompliſhed.

CHAP. XIII.

That the Manner of God's promulgating his Law amongſt the ISRAELITES, *did much conduce to the diſtinguiſhing them from all other Nations.*

I DO not barely deſign here at firſt to obſerve the ſeveral reſemblances, which are obſervable betwixt the things related by *Moſes* in *Geneſis*, and thoſe which one finds in the following books.

Neither will I meerly eſtabliſh here that, as *Jacob*'s going down into *Egypt* with all his children, and the protection that they all received there, from *Joſeph*, did ſerve to fulfil the prediction which God made of that event by *Joſeph*'s dreams; ſo we may ſay in general, that the ſending of *Moſes*, his miracles, and his whole miniſtry to the time of his death, when he entruſted *Joſhuah* with the conduct of the *Jews*, were a litteral accompliſhment of the firſt part of the promiſe, which God had formerly made to *Abraham*, to deliver the fourth generation of his poſterity out of the captivity, which it was to fall into, and then to bring it into the land of *Canaan* to poſſeſs it.

Moſes indeed repreſents that people according to the tenour of the propheſie, as groaning under the hard preſſure of a cruel captivity in *Egypt*, when *Joſeph* and his eminent ſervices were both forgotten.

Afterwards he tells us, how they were miraculouſly delivered out of that captivity.

And then laſtly he informs us, that after he had carried them through many difficulties in the wilderneſs, he brought them at laſt to the very borders of *Canaan*, and ſo left them ready to conquer and poſſeſs it, according to God's promiſes, and their pretenſions grounded upon thoſe promiſes which had been ſo often repeated to them ever ſince *Abraham*'s time.

Joſhua, *Moſes* ſucceſſour, and in all likelihood, the author of the deſcription of his death, is he that accompliſhed the other part of God's promiſe to *Abraham*, by introducing the *Iſraelites* into *Canaan*, and actually poſſeſſing them of it: ſo there is nothing can be imagined more preciſe in this whole matter.

But it is not all this only that renders both the perſon and miniſtry of *Moſes* ſo glorious: there are ſeveral other things in *Exodus*, and his other following books, which do much better deſerve our conſideration.

Thoſe

Thoſe books contain, as I have already obſerved an exact hiſtory, of all that God did in order to give a certain form to the common-wealth of *Iſrael*, a fixed place, and a particular ſervice, that is in order to follow his great deſign of having the Meſſiah known without miſtake, whenever he ſhould be born amongſt the *Jews*; and this is my chiefeſt aim in the reflexions upon *Exodus* and the other books of *Moſes*.

Firſt, we might ſay in general, that the obſervance of the ſabbath, and the uſe of circumciſion, did diſtinguiſh the *Jews*; but yet, I have ſhew'd, that the ſabbath was a law common to all nations in the world, and that circumciſion on the other hand was common both to the *Iſmaelites* and *Edomites*: and this will oblige us to make ſome particular obſervations upon that matter; and we muſt conſider how God took care to diſtinguiſh that people, by giving them his law.

It is in general evident, that the care which God took to give the moral law to that whole people, did eminently diſtinguiſh them from all other nations, whom he permitted to walk in their own ways, as St. *Paul* expreſſes it; to be ſure it ſhews them that he reſolved to fix them to himſelf, and to hinder them from following, both the idolatries of other nations, and thoſe inundations of vice, which ruine all ſocieties.

And without doubt, the ſurprizing pomp which accompanied the promulgation of God's law, and which was recorded by his order, before thoſe that had been the eye-witneſſes of it, did much contribute to perſwade them that God had a particular regard and kindneſs for their nation, and that he honoured them with his particular guidance.

We may make the ſame obſervation upon God's giving them a political law, and upon the care that he was alſo pleaſed to take of regulating their civil government, and preventing the difficulties which are commonly occaſioned by ſuch accidents as cannot be foreſeen by any human legiſlators, which cauſe great revolutions and changes in all governments, all which ſhew ſufficiently, that his deſign was to raiſe them up to, and to maintain them in as great proſperity and welfare, as poſſibly could be procured to a nation by perfect laws, and a well conſtituted government; even the many ceremonies which God gave them, are a further demonſtration of God's deſign to diſtinguiſh them from other nations.

It ſeems not to have been God's intention at firſt to lay upon them ſuch numbers of ceremonies; for it was only after the commiſſion of the ſin of the golden calf, that God laid upon them that heavy and troubleſome yoak, on purpoſe to imploy all their time, and ſo keep them from falling into idolatry again. But however *Tanchuma* (*c*), a famous *Jewiſh* author obſerves, that there was nothing left in the world, but what God took care to give the *Iſraelites* ſome laws about; as for inſtance, if any *Jew* went out to plow, he was forbidden to do it with an ox and an aſs: if to ſow, he was forbidden to ſow his field with ſeveral kinds of ſeed: if to reap, he was forbidden to reap the whole crop: if any one went about to bake bread, he was commanded to take of out his dough, ſo much as to make a cake thereof to conſecrate it: if any one did ſacrifice any animal, he was charged to give away to the prieſt, the right ſhoulder of it, with both the cheeks and inwards: when any one found out

(*c*) *Talkut.* in *Pent.* fol. 228. col. 3.

out a neſt of birds, he was obliged to let the old one fly away: if any one went a hunting, he was to ſhed the blood of his game, and then to cover it with duſt: when any one had planted any fruit-trees, he was to count the firſt thereof as uncircumciſed for the three firſt years: when any one found a ſepulchre, even there certain cautions are preſcribed: if any one ſhaved himſelf, he was forbidden to *mar the corners of his beard:* when any one built a houſe, he was to take care there ſhould be rails, and *Mezouzoth* made to prevent all danger: they were obliged to put particular threads in their garments, and there are many other things, which were apparently commanded to diſtinguiſh the *Jews*, by obliging them to the practice of theſe and ſuch other laws as took up all their time. But if we may ſay in general, that the whole ſcope of the ceremonial law was to employ the *Jews:* we may yet more juſtly ſay, that it was in particular intended by God to inſpire into his people a horrour againſt all idolatrous practiſes, and an averſion againſt all commerce with idolaters: and this may be further diſcerned, if we examine thoſe laws in particular.

One ſee's this perfectly by the manner of God's pronouncing ſome meats unclean, and his forbidding to eat the fleſh of ſome animals. For we may find, that the greateſt part of theſe animals were worſhipped amongſt the heathens. Thus the more learned amongſt the *Jews* prove, that the goat and the ram were of that number, but ſo no doubt were all the animals which were uſually offered in ſacrifice to God, as particularly the bull: now there is nothing which alienates two nations from one another more, than when one of them eats, or ſacrifices, that which the other makes the object of its religion.

One of the moſt learned authors that ever the *Jews* had, hath diligently obſerved, that God gave many ceremonial laws directly contrary to thoſe rites which the *Zabii* uſed in their ſuperſtitions, and a learned *Engliſh* Doctor (*d*) hath lately proved it very largely; as to the ceremonies which God commanded to be uſed in the ſacrifice of the paſchal-lamb, and in the manner of their building of the altar, and of their going up to it, in the prohibition of ſeething a kid in his mothers milk, and of offering honey in their ſacrifices, in the prohibition of their forcing their children to paſs through the fire to *Moloch*, in the law which prohibited their eating blood, and rounding the corners of their heads; and making any marks in their fleſh, and in I do not know how many other laws of that nature, the deſign of whoſe inſtitution is not ſo evident now ſince the rites of all thoſe ancient idolaters are utterly aboliſhed, and but imperfectly recorded in ſome ancient authors.

Thus we ſee, that we need only make a very little reflexion upon God's conduct, in giving all his laws to the *Iſraelites*, thereby to judge, that the main ſcope of thoſe laws, was to put a bar betwixt the people of *Iſrael*, and all other idolatrous nations, which ſhould be a viſible, and a conſtant diſtinction, till the Meſſiah ſhould be born, who was to make all thoſe marks of diſcrimination to ceaſe entirely.

(*d*) *Spencer* de Leg. *Moſ.* lib. 2.

CHAP. XIV.

CHAP. XIV.

That God ſeems to have deſigned to keep up a Spirit of Jealouſie in the very Boſom of the JEWISH *Nation.*

WE have ſeen in general, that God by giving his law to the *Iſraelites*, intended to diſcriminate them from all other nations of the world, and in particular from thoſe nations which had ſhewed themſelves to be jealous of that diſtinction; I mean from the *Moabites*, the *Ammonites*, the *Iſmaelites*, and the *Edomites*, as I ſhall hereafter ſhew. I have likewiſe obſerved, that God by his conduct, and his oracles, did alſo excite a ſpirit of jealouſie amongſt the ſeveral pretenders to the promiſe. I come now to ſhew that God hath follow'd the ſame deſign in his law, and that he hath made uſe of that jealouſie as of another means, to make that people, which he had ſeparated from all other nations, keep up always amongſt themſelves a lively notion, and expectation of the Meſſiah.

Perhaps the reader may think, that theſe reflections may interrupt the ſeries of the obſervations I have undertaken to make upon *Moſes*'s law: but beſides that I ſhall reſume them preſently, ſo one may eaſily diſcern, that theſe two remarks concerning the ſpirit of diſtinction, and the ſpirit of jealouſie, kept up in the boſom of this people, ought to be well conſidered by thoſe that deſire to know the genius of God's laws, and the original cauſes of all the tranſactions related by *Moſes*, and by the other ſacred authors, who acted in purſuance of that deſign which appears in thoſe laws which *Moſes* gave to the people of *Iſrael*.

I begin with two general reflexions, which, I think are very uſeful in the explication of God's conduct upon this occaſion.

Two things, as I have already obſerved, have conduced to keep up that jealouſie, whereof *Moſes* has given ſo many inſtances in the book of *Geneſis*.

The firſt is, the preference which God hath commonly given to the younger brothers before the elder.

The ſecond is, the choice which God hath made of ſuch particular perſons as appeared abſolutely unworthy of God's choice.

So that here one ſee's a continual ſeries in the Jewiſh hiſtory written by *Moſes*, and by the Prophets, who made the ſame obſervations upon that *model* which *Moſes* had given them.

Firſt of all, the tribe of *Judah* is preferred before all the other tribes of *Iſrael*, and particularly before the tribe of *Reuben*, which afterwards occaſioned the inſurrection of ſome *Reubenites* in their ſedition againſt *Moſes*, wherein *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram* periſhed: juſt as God's preferring *Abel* offended *Cain*, and as *Joſeph*'s brethren conſpired together to put him to death, becauſe of his dreams, which foretold his greatneſs and their fall.

Secondly, one ſee's that *Phares*, *Judah*'s youngeſt ſon, is preferred not only before all the other children of *Judah*, but even before *Zerah* the

the eldeſt of the twins which *Judah* had by *Thamar*; juſt as *Jacob* was preferred before his brother *Eſau*, tho' they were twins, and *Eſau* born the firſt of the two.

One ſees afterwards, that God having choſen *Jeſſe* of all the poſterity of *Phares*, *David* the youngeſt of all his ſons, was preferred before his brethren, when God was pleaſed to tranſlate the kingdom to the tribe of *Judah*, and to the family of *Jeſſe*. Juſt as we ſaw before, that, in the election of the firſt king, whom the *Iſraelites* deſired to be ſet over them, that he was choſen by lot by an extraordinary effect of providence out of the tribe of *Benjamin*, tho' the youngeſt of all *Jacob*'s children.

Thus one ſee's that *Solomon* the youngeſt of *David*'s children, was preferred before his brothers, and that the ſame *Solomon* built the temple of God in the tribe of *Benjamin*, tho' he himſelf was of the tribe of *Judah*.

We ſhall afterwards ſee, that the Meſſiah was deſcended from *David* by *Nathan*, ſon to one of *David*'s younger children, and by *Reſah Zorobabel*'s youngeſt ſon, from whom the Bleſſed Virgin drew her original.

The ſecond remark is about the care God hath taken by his choice of ſome particular perſons to accompliſh the promiſe, to furniſh thoſe with pretences and objections, who might be intereſted, to oppoſe the reſtrictions which God had made in favour of their equals; for as they ſerved to keep up a jealouſie amongſt all the pretenders to the promiſe, ſo they alſo ſerved to preſerve a diſtinct knowledge of it, and to make them inquire more diligently after it.

In ſhort, as we ſee that the *Iſmaelites* might upbraid *Sarah* both with her frequent rapes, and with her cruelty to *Agar* and *Iſmael*: as the *Edomites* might upbraid *Jacob*'s poſterity with *Rebecca*'s ſupplanting their father *Eſau*, and cheating him of his bleſſing; ſo likewiſe we may obſerve, that God not only choſe *Thamar* to have the Meſſiah deſcend from her; but alſo would have her inceſt with her father-in-law recorded. What might all the other tribes of *Iſrael* ſay, were there then no honeſt women in *Iſrael*, that the Meſſiah's anceſtors muſt deſcend from thoſe that were born of an inceſtuous commerce? What probability is there, that God ſhould chooſe the tribe of *Judah*? Had not all the other children of *Judah* a fairer pretenſion to this priviledge, than *Phares* could have? And might not their poſterity revive againſt the poſterity of *Phares*, that ſevere law againſt baſtard children which we read of *Deut.* XXIII.

God choſe in the like manner *Ruth* the *Moabiteſs*, and had her hiſtory written, and his choice recorded, as if he had intended to prepare an excuſe for thoſe of the *Iſraelites* who afterwards would refuſe to ſubmit to *David*. What probability is there might they ſay, that God would have the Meſſiah to be born of a *Moabiteſs*, ſeeing it was by his order, that *Moſes* cauſed all thoſe *Iſraelites* to be put to death, who after the pronunciation of *Balaam*'s propheſie, held any commerce with the daughters of *Moab*? Was there any likelihood that ſuch a thing could be poſſible, eſpecially ſeeing there was a law which God would have to be inſerted in *Deuteronomy*, which excludeth the *Moabites* from the poſſibility of ever being admitted into the people of God. But at leaſt, was not

this choice of *Ruth* the *Moabiteſs*, a fair cauſe of jealouſie to all the other families of *Judah*?

God cauſed the adultery of *Bathſheba*, the mother of *Solomon*, to be carefully recorded, as it were on purpoſe to excuſe the rebellion of thoſe who afterwards ſided with *Jeroboam*, againſt *Rehoboam* and his authority.

Is it probable (might theſe rebels ſay) that God would have choſen that bloody cruel man *David*, that adulterer, that he and *Bathſhebah* ſhould beget the Meſſiah together?

Had *Jeſſe* no other children beſides *David*? And if *David* muſt needs have been the man, why ſhould *Solomon* born of *Bathſhebah* be preferred before all his brothers?

There are three things conſiderable in this matter.

The firſt is, that God having given to *Joſhuah*, the conduct of the *Iſraelites*, after he had formerly raiſed *Joſeph* ſo much above his brethren by his advancement in *Egypt*, and given to his tribe two portions of the land of *Canaan*; he permitted, that *Jeroboam* ſhould riſe up againſt *Rehoboam*, *Solomon*'s ſon, and not only ſo, but ſhould likewiſe, according to the propheſie related, *Gen.* XXVIII. 17. build a temple at *Bethel*, as being jealous againſt *Solomon*, who built one upon mount *Moriah*, according to the propheſie we find in *Geneſis* XXII. 14.

The ſecond is, that this ſeparation, gave a fair pretence to raiſe the reputation of the propheſies which *Jacob* uttered upon his death-bed in favour of *Joſeph*; which propheſies ran in terms ſo very high, that they not only gave colour to *Jeroboam*'s pretenſions to the kingdom, but did alſo lead the ten tribes into an expectation, that the Meſſiah ſhould be born, not in the tribe of *Judah*, as *Jacob* had expreſly foretold *Geneſis* XLIX. but in the tribe of *Ephraim*, according to the conſtant cuſtom of God's preferring the younger ſons of a family before the elder, in the matter of this promiſe.

The third is, that even the greateſt part of the two loyal tribes received at laſt the interpretation which the other ten made of that propheſie. At leaſt, it appears, that many of the *Jews* have endeavoured to prove, that the Meſſiah ſhould come from the tribe of *Ephraim*, by interpreting ſeveral propheſies that way, which according to their account and their prejudices, were expreſſed in ſuch terms, as could not be underſtood of him, that was to be born in the tribe of *Judah*, and out of the royal family of *David*.

CHAP. XV.

That Circumcision was a Means of distinguishing the ISRAELITES *from other Nations.*

BUT I must now resume my observations upon *Moſes*'s laws. Circumcision was, without question, one of the first, and most sensible means whereby God did distinguish *Jacob*'s posterity from all other people. I will therefore begin with it.

First, the very signification of the word circumcision, implies a real, and corporeal distinction: even *Tacitus* understood it so when he saith, *Circumcidere genitalia instituêre Judæi ut diversitate noscantur* (*e*). But besides, by it God's covenant was, as it were, printed, and ingraved in the very flesh of all *Abraham*'s posterity.

God has explained it thus himself in several places; and one may affirm, that this was very agreeable to God's design, which was, as we have intimated before, to hinder that people, from which the Messiah was to be born, from mingling with the other nations of the world, which would have made the pedigree of the Messiah suspected, or at least much more difficult to be traced.

I will not relate here, the several notions of divines about the use of that ceremony, but only content my self to make two very natural reflexions upon it.

The first of which is, that it was particularly in respect of the Messiah, that God would have that mark made upon that part of man's body which is inservient to generation. As the Messiah was to come into the world by generation, according to the words of the first prophesie concerning him, and also according to the further revelations of God to *Abraham*, about that promise, so God could do nothing more agreeable to the idea the *Israelites* had of the Messiah, and of his birth, than to distinguish them, by a relation to that blessed seed, which he promised them; as God designed, without all question, by that means to oblige the *Jews* to remember the first promise made to mankind; so no doubt, he intended by it to fix their minds upon the consideration of that favour he had shew'd to them, as well as to *Abraham*, to distinguish them from all the people of the earth, that the deliverer of the world might be born in their common-wealth, and from one of their posterity.

The second reflexion is, that it was the same prospect of the Messiah, which made God condemn those to death, who should either remain uncircumcised themselves, or leave their children so.

Is it not a very surprizing thing, that so much rigour and severity should be used in exacting the observation of a ceremony, which was merely indifferent in its nature, and had no moral goodness in it self? But hereby it appears the more evidently, that God design'd, that the use of circumcision, by which he distinguished *Abraham*'s posterity from all

(*e*) Hist. l. i.

all other nations of the world, ſhould be a kind of immoveable bar, to hinder the *Jews* from mingling with all ſtrangers.

Indeed there are three things which may be objected againſt theſe reflexions.

The firſt is, that it does not appear, that this ceremony was counted ſuch a proper ſign of diſtinction, ſeeing the uſe of it hath been ſometimes intermitted: as for inſtance, when the whole nation of the *Jews* left it off for forty years in the wilderneſs.

The ſecond is, that if the chiefeſt end of circumciſion was to diſtinguiſh that people, with deſign to make the Meſſiah known: there was no need that that yoak ſhould be laid upon all the *Jews*, but only upon the family from which he was to deſcend, or at the moſt upon the tribe wherein that family was comprized.

The third is, that circumciſion was common both to *Eſau*'s and *Jacob*'s poſterity; and even uſed amongſt the *Egyptians*, and the inhabitants of *Colchis*, as we may learn from *Herodotus*, and ſome other heathen authors.

But after all, it is an eaſie thing to ſatisfie a man's mind in all theſe appearing difficulties. I confeſs, that one is ſurprized to ſee that God ſhould not oblige the *Jews* to be circumciſed in the wilderneſs, for which ſeveral reaſons are given.

Firſt, that God being diſpleaſed with that generation, would not allow, that they ſhould be honoured with this token of his covenant; others ſay, that their journying in the wilderneſs gave them a diſpenſation from the obſervance of that ceremony. But we may give a better, I think, and more natural account of that matter, if we do but follow the idea which occaſioned my ſecond reflexion.

The going forth of ſome *Egyptians* with the *Iſraelites* out of *Egypt*, was a type of the calling of the Gentiles, as I will ſhew ſomewhere elſe: it was then neceſſary, that as all ceremonies, and circumciſion in particular, were then to be aboliſhed, to take away all diſtinction from among *Seth*'s poſterity, ſo the uſe of circumciſion ſhould at that time be ſuſpended.

However, God would not have the ſuſpenſion of that ceremony, to continue till they were entered into the land of *Canaan*.

Firſt, to prevent the intruding of ſome *Canaanites* into the body of the *Hebrews*.

Secondly, to the end that theſe *Iſraelites* who were to enter into *Canaan*, being as well uncircumciſed as the *Egyptians* children, and being all made afterwards equal by circumciſion, ſhould have no occaſion to upbraid them with their *different original*.

The ſecond objection may as eaſily be anſwered: one might think at firſt, that indeed the Meſſiah had been more eaſily known at his coming, if the uſe of circumciſion had been injoyned only to the family, or at moſt, to the tribe from which he was to deſcend: but beſides that, it had expoſed that family, or that tribe to great perſecutions, it had certainly much diminiſhed that ſpirit of jealouſie which was kept up by the conformity of the ſeveral pretenders, which on the other hand was of mighty uſe to preſerve a diſtinct idea of the Meſſiah, and a deſire of his coming.

As for the third objection, there is no difficulty in it: 'tis true, ſome *Jewiſh* interpreters imagine, that *Joſeph* took occaſion to preſcribe the uſe of circumciſion to the *Egyptians*, after *Pharaoh* had commanded his people to do whatſoever *Joſeph* ſhould bid them to do: but that conjecture is groundleſs; for it appears, that the *Egyptians* who went out of *Egypt* with *Moſes*, were not circumciſed. 'Tis true, that nation did ſome ages after *Moſes*, take up the ceremony of circumciſion; and it is very likely, that it was ſome *Egyptian* colony which introduced the uſe of it into *Colchis:* but the obſervance of that ſole ceremony amongſt thoſe nations could cauſe no confuſion, becauſe none of them pretended to derive their original from *Abraham*, but had as hiſtorians obſerve, quite different reaſons from thoſe which the *Jews* had for their practice of circumciſion.

As for the *Iſmaelites* and *Edomites*, the greateſt part of the *Jews* are of opinion, that God did diſcriminate their circumciſion from the circumciſion which was practiſed by thoſe nations, by his inſtitution of what they call the *periqua* after the circumciſion; which they endeavour to prove by a paſſage in *Joſhua*, wherein it is ſaid, that God ordered *Joſhua* to circumcile again the children of *Iſrael* the ſecond time. But others of them laugh at that criticiſm, becauſe it appears that thoſe words do relate to the ſecond ſolemn circumciſion which that people did obſerve after their deliverance out of *Egypt:* therefore, without running to this anſwer, one needs only follow the idea we have already made uſe of, which is drawn from God's deſign of keeping up a ſpirit of jealoſie, by ſome conformity betwixt the circumciſion practiſed by the *Jews*, and the ceremonies uſed amongſt thoſe rival nations.

Why then were ſome of the neighbouring nations of *Canaan*, deſcended from *Abraham* circumciſed? As for example, the *Iſmaelites* in *Arabia*, who were circumciſed at thirteen years of age; the poſterity of *Abraham* by *Keturah*, *viz.* the *Midianites* who were in the countrey of *Moab*, and the *Edomites* deſcended from *Eſau*, who did all practiſe circumciſion?

Certainly, it is evident, that as God ſet the *Iſraelites* in the midſt of all thoſe nations, who by virtue of their anceſtors birthright, or ſome other pretenſions, put in their claim with the *Jews* to the execution of the promiſe, on purpoſe to excite the attention of this people who were ſurrounded with theſe rivals. So he did for the ſame reaſon permit, that the *Iſmaelites*, the *Midianites*, and *Edomites* ſhould practiſe the ceremony of circumciſion, almoſt in the ſame manner that the *Iſraelites* did.

But that we may the better apprehend the force of this reflexion, we need only conſider the jealouſie, which is cauſed amongſt the ſeveral ſects of Chriſtians, by the conformity of ſacraments, which is ſo far from uniting them with one another, as it might juſtly be expected; that on the contrary, one may ſay, that this conformity in ſome things alienates them from one another, and breeds reciprocal jealouſies amongſt their ſeveral parties, eſpecially when they come to reflect upon the other controverted articles, that cauſe the ſeparation.

Moreover, it is reaſonable to conſider that God had provided a ſufficient diſtinction, betwixt that people, and other nations, by giving them many

many other laws, which had no other viſible uſe than that of *diſcrimination*; as for inſtance, the three great feaſts which the *Jews* were obliged to keep.

The feaſt of the paſſover, was the memorial of the accompliſhment of God's promiſe to *Abraham* to deliver his poſterity out of the countrey wherein they were to be in bondage after 430 years; and conſequently could not be obſerved by the *Iſmaelites*, nor by the *Edomites* who had never been captives in, nor delivered out of *Egypt* in the fourth generation.

The *Pentecoſt* was a publick monument of the promulgation of the law, and all its parts, amongſt the children of *Iſrael*, and conſequently peculiar to that nation.

Thus the feaſt of tabernacles preſerved the memory of that ſolemn action of the *Iſraelites* continuance for forty years in the deſert.

It were needleſs, after ſuch remarkable diſtinctions, to obſerve here, (which yet was certainly deſigned for that end) that God took care to diſtinguiſh that people by ſome injunctions, which they were to obſerve, in the faſhion of their cloaths, of their beard, of their philacteries, of their mezouzoth, of their thaleth, of their zizith, and many the like things, the obſervance of all which ſerved to hinder any confuſion of the people of *Iſrael*, with their neighbours.

CHAP. XVI.

That the Law of Moſes *engaged the* Jews *to the Study of their Genealogies, that they might certainly know that of the Meſſiah.*

BUT if God took care to diſtinguiſh his people from all other nations by ſuch an indelible mark, in the practice whereof there was no fear of any trick; ſeeing no man would circumcile himſelf without thinking upon it more than once, as the hiſtory of the *Sichemites* aſſures us; ſo one ſees, that he took as great a care to divide them into tribes, and the tribes into families, that they might ſubſiſt and continue in a kind of a ſeparation from one another, altho' they were at firſt but one ſingle family, and one ſingle nation.

Now to what purpoſe, I pray, were all thoſe diſtinctions, if they had not been deſigned, to manifeſt the Meſſiah at his coming.

We ſee then, that they could have no other uſe, for as God had decreed, that the Meſſiah ſhould be born out of the tribe of *Judah*, ſo it was neceſſary, that the ſeveral genealogies of that tribe ſhould be very publickly known.

And therefore one ſees that God ſecured this, not only with all neceſſary care, but even with a caution greater than could have been reaſonably deſired.

He engages all the tribes of *Iſrael* to preſerve with a kind of affecta-

tion, their ſeveral genealogical tables; he neglects none of the means that might be uſeful to diſtinguiſh the tribe of *Judah* from other tribes, and the family from which the Meſſiah was to be deſcended from all the other families of the ſame tribe.

Indeed I am not ignorant that anciently one might ſee ſome other nations uſing the diſtinctions of tribes amongſt themſelves, much after the ſame manner as the *Jews* did, and that they were careful to preſerve their genealogies in order to derive their original from the ſame common father: thus we ought to underſtand what we read in hiſtory of the tribes amongſt the *Athenians*. Thus *Hippocrates* runs up his own pedigree to the twentieth man of his anceſtors, and *Herodotus* mentions ſeveral inſtances of the ſame care.

But one ſees that this affectation was infinitely greater among the *Jews*.

For we ſee, that they did not only rank themſelves every one under the ſtandard of their own tribe, at their going forth out of *Egypt*, but that God did alſo engage every man to know his tribe exactly; nay, he compelled them all in a manner, to ſtudy their own pedigrees, that every one might claim, and reap the benefit of the law of *Jubilee*, which had the force of an entail in reſpect of every family, as I am now going to ſhew.

There are three things obſervable in that matter.

The firſt is, that it was by a ſuperabundant precaution, that God would engage the tribes to continue diſtinguiſh'd from one another, and to preſerve and ſtudy their ſeveral pedigrees; namely, he intended by that means to prevent the objection which might otherwiſe have been made, that it was impoſſible for a tribe, and a family in that tribe to continue diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of the nation, for ſo many ages; for certainly, if all the tribes in that nation, and all the families in every tribe, did continue, by God's providence, ſo long diſtinguiſhed from one another, there is no doubt to be made, but he could preſerve the ſingle tribe of *Judah*, and the family of the Meſſiah diſtinguiſhed from all other tribes, and families of the people of *Iſrael*.

The ſecond remark is, that it was for this diſtinction ſake, that the books of the Old Teſtament were fill'd with genealogical tables; to what purpoſe elſe had books of that importance, and which treated of ſuch great ſubjects been filled with genealogies? *Moſes*'s books are full of them: the firſt book of Chronicles reſumes thoſe genealogies with all poſſible exactneſs; there is nothing more conſiderable in the book of *Ruth*, than the genealogy of *David* and his family.

The third remark is, that if the genealogy of the prieſts ſeem to have been better known, than that of other families, by reaſon of their being the publick miniſters of religion, which ſeems to give the advantage of certainty of diſtinction to the tribe of *Levi* above that of *Judah*, in that particular; yet we find, that all the families of the whole nation took much the ſame care to preſerve their own genealogies; ſo that if after the *Babylonian* captivity, ſome particular perſons were excluded from the prieſtly order, to which they pretended, becauſe they could not make out their pedigree: ſo likewiſe all were thrown out from the other tribes, that could not juſtifie their lineal deſcent.

Nay,

Nay, there is ſomething further, deſerves to be taken notice of, as being very ſingular in that of *Judah*: and one ought here to conſider a miſtery of God's providence, and admire the wiſdom of his conduct, in purſuing the deſign which *Moſes* firſt ſets down, and upon which one ſees, that the whole *Jewiſh* ſtate was formed; for when God reſolved, that the Meſſiah ſhould deſcend from the tribe of *Juda*, and the houſe of *David*, he made it more particularly known and diſtinguiſh'd than any other family in the whole nation, and for that reaſon he ſets *David* upon the throne.

Every one knows, that in every kingdom the genealogy of a king, and of the royal family, is of all others the moſt publickly known.

Now if the blood royal alone is always diſtinguiſhed how much more muſt it be ſo, when that ſupream dignity is conferred upon ſuch a family, as God had particularly choſen, to have the Meſſiah, who is ſet forth as the deſire of all nations, to be born out of it.

From hence I will boldly conclude, that the only end for which God raiſed *David*'s family to the throne, was becauſe the Meſſiah was really to be born out of that family, reduc'd to a low, and private condition, which *Iſaiah* foretold, ſaying, That *a rod ſhould come forth out of the ſtem of* Jeſſe, *and a branch grow out of his roots* (*f*); and in another place, That *he ſhould grow up as a root out of a dry ground* (*g*), which was very agreeable to the character of a Prophet, and to the low ſtate of humiliation, in which our Saviour was to appear in the world.

CHAP. XVII.

A Solution of ſome Difficulties in theſe Genealogies.

INDEED the diſperſion of the ten tribes ſeems to be a very natural objection to thoſe who would diſpute the reflexions which I have already made upon theſe genealogies.

But after all, there is nothing in it but what confirms the more the ſaid reflexions.

And we may ſay, that the intire diſperſion of the whole tribe of *Ephraim*, and of the others which adhered to it in *Jeroboam*'s rebellion, is a miſtery of providence which challenges our admiration, as much as the raiſing up that family to the throne, out of which the Meſſiah was to be born.

To apprehend this the better, we need only call to mind the pretenſions of the tribe of *Ephraim*: this *Ephraim* was the younger brother of *Manaſſeh*; but *Jacob* had given him the birthright, juſt as *Iſaac* before had given it to *Jacob*, tho' it did of right belong to the elder brother.

Jacob had particularly bleſſed *Ephraim*, and even made it a form of bleſſing for after ages, as we read in the book of *Ruth*, that there was

(*f*) Iſa. xi. (*g*) Iſa. liii.

one made for *Pharez*. *Jacob* had given to *Joſeph* two portions in the land of *Canaan*, and *Ephraim* had the birthright before *Manaſſeh*, by God's order; it was then very natural for the tribe of *Ephraim*, as all tribes did apply to themſelves the ſeveral priviledges promiſed to their reſpective heads, to look upon themſelves, as having a particular right to God's bleſſing.

And they thought this right of theirs was plainly made out, as by *Joſeph*'s dreams, ſo eſpecially by the words of that prediction which *Jacob* gave in favour of *Ephraim*, the words of which run ſo very high, that after ſuch a prejudice, there might very well be a fair pretence for the hope which the tribe of *Ephraim* had once to ſee a Meſſiah come out of their tribe, as thoſe of *Judah* expected one out of theirs.

If to all this we add, that *Jeroboam*'s rebellion was authoriz'd by a prophetical inſpiration, and by a ſpecial ſign of God's approbation; and that on the other hand he deſired to propoſe to his people the two calves which he ſet up in *Dan* and *Bethel*, as ſymbols of the Deity, only to purſue the idea's of *Pharaoh*'s dreams, which *Joſeph* interpreted, the repreſentation whereof, did clearly ſhew both the greatneſs of *Joſeph*, and the particular care of God's providence over him (*b*). It was then natural, to the men of *Ephraim*, to feed themſelves with ſuch hopes, as the *Jews* teach us they did, when even to this very day they ſpeak of a Meſſiah of the tribe of *Ephraim*.

What did God then do, to obviate theſe pretenſions of the tribe of *Ephraim*? He diſperſed them, together with the other nine tribes that ſubmitted to the authority of its kings, and ſo confounded them with all thoſe tribes which followed their fortune, that tho' there ſhould be ſtill ſome *Ephraimites* in the world, yet it would be impoſſible for any of them to juſtifie his pedigree ſo clearly, as that any Meſſiah really deſcended from that very tribe, could by eſtabliſhing his genealogy, put his being of the tribe of *Ephraim* beyond all conteſt.

Now according to this notion of things it is viſible (if we may be allowed to enter into the counſels of God,) that he did particularly preſerve the tribes of *Levi*, and *Benjamin*, with the tribe of *Judah*, which was the only tribe that was to be preſerved of neceſſity.

Firſt, becauſe as St. *Paul* to the *Hebrews* obſerves, there was nothing ever ſaid as to the Meſſiah, of the tribe of *Levi*.

Secondly, becauſe God would by that means confound the more effectually all the claims of the tribe of *Ephraim*.

For in ſhort, if the tribe of *Ephraim* was inveſted by God with the kingdom over nine tribes of the people of *Iſrael*, ſo had the tribe of *Benjamin* been raiſed up before to the ſovereignty over all *Iſrael*, over the tribe of *Judah*, and even that of *Ephraim* it ſelf.

If the tribe of *Ephraim* was deſcended from a younger brother, to whom *Jacob* had given his bleſſing in prejudice of *Manaſſeh* his elder brother, (which is conſiderable becauſe God hath almoſt conſtantly preferr'd the younger before the elder) ſo the tribe of *Benjamin* was deſcended from him that was both the younger brother of *Joſeph* himſelf, and the youngeſt of all *Jacob*'s children, notwithſtanding which, the tribe of

Benjamin

(*b*) *Talm. in Succa* c. 5. *in Gem.*

Benjamin did freely yield to the tribe of *Judah*, and granted that the glory of giving birth to the Meſſiah, was wholly due to them.

Be it as it will, there are two reflexions more which muſt be made concerning theſe genealogies which appear very natural in this place.

The firſt is, that both St. *Matthew*, and St. *Luke* do begin their Goſpel with the genealogy of the Meſſiah.

The other is, that ſome time after St. *Paul* condemns the ſtudy of genealogies, which was ſtill much in uſe amongſt the *Jews*, as vain; Why therefore is there ſuch a different conduct amongſt the diſciples of the ſame maſter?

Certainly, whoever ſhall conſider with attention the grounds which I have laid down before muſt acknowledge, that both St. *Matthew*, and St. *Luke*, ought to have begun their books, as they have done, with the genealogy of the Meſſiah.

For firſt of all, it was neceſſary that the deſcent of the Meſſiah from *Abraham* by *David*, ſhould be clearly made out: it was requiſite therefore that they ſhould ſet down ſuch a genealogy as was known by the whole *Jewiſh* nation: now this they have done with very great care, and the thing was ſo eaſie, and ſo well known, that even a blind-man of the neighbourhood of *Samaria*, the chief city of the kings of *Ephraim*, did publickly call *Jeſus* the ſon of *David*.

But on the other ſide, St. *Paul*'s forbidding the ſtudy of genealogies, does not at all contradict the method of thoſe two Evangeliſts.

In ſhort, he purſues the very ſame notions: he ſaw, that the converted *Jews* apply'd themſelves to the ſtudy of genealogies, which was then ſo great a part of the ſtudy of their nation: it is ſtill practiſed among the *Jews*, to that degree, that ſince their diſperſion they gave an exact relation of all the Doctors and Rabbies amongſt them who have preſerved the tradition, and who were proſelytes of juſtice (*i*): What therefore was to be done in this caſe? He took it for granted, that God had engaged every *Jew* to ſtudy his own pedigree with care, for no other end but only to have that of the Meſſiah diſtinctly known whenever he ſhould come.

But the uſe of theſe genealogies being once over, by the Meſſiah's coming into the world, he obſerves with reaſon, that it was no longer neceſſary to keep up the vain ſtudy of all thoſe genealogies.

So that we ſee he ſpeaks againſt the ſtudy of pedigrees, much upon the ſame grounds as in other places he inveighs againſt circumciſion; for ſince the chiefeſt uſe of genealogies, as well as of circumciſion, was to diſtinguiſh *Abraham*'s poſterity from the reſt of mankind, till the Meſſiah was come; the uſe of theſe two obſervations was naturally to ceaſe after he was once come.

It is, no doubt, for the ſame reaſon, that whereas the *Jews* in the Apoſtle's time took great care upon all occaſions, to take notice of the tribe from which they were deſcended, as well as to ſet down the names of their fathers, yet one ſees that the Apoſtles did not all affect it. And if St. *Paul* mentions his being a *Benjamite*: it was for a particular reaſon, for otherwiſe as he preached down the diſtinction betwixt

Jews

(*i*) *Maimon. Præf. ad Jad. Chazaka.*

Jews and *Gentiles*, ſo he declared himſelf with the ſame earneſtneſs againſt the diſtinctions which were obſerved amongſt their tribes.

CHAP. XVIII.

That the Manner whereby the Law of MOSES *fixed the People of* ISRAEL *to the Land of* CANAAN, *was to keep them ſeparated from other Nations.*

ONE of the chiefeſt means, which God made uſe of, to diſtinguiſh his people of *Iſrael* from the reſt of mankind, was ſo to fix their affections upon the land of *Canaan*, that they ſhould look upon it, as a countrey which belonged to them by a particular conceſſion from God, which derogated from the *Canaanites* right, to whom that countrey fell in the diviſion of the earth that was made amongſt the children of *Noah*, or which reeſtabliſhed the poſterity of *Shem* in their juſt rights, to whom, if we may credit the ancient tradition, related by St. *Epiphanius* (*k*), this countrey did really belong by virtue of that diviſion amongſt the three ſons of *Noah*, tho' afterwards they were driven out of it by the poſterity of *Ham*.

Moſes ſeems to have expreſſed this truth, when he ſaith *Gen.* XII. that when *Abraham* came to *Canaan*, the *Canaanite* was already in the land; that is, he had already invaded it, neither can we refer what he relates in the XIV. Chapter, concerning the war which the kings from the eaſt came to make againſt the kings of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha* to any thing elſe. 'Twas then for this reaſon, that long before *Moſes*'s time, God took *Abraham* out of *Chaldea*, from amongſt *Shem*'s poſterity to bring him into *Canaan* amongſt the *Hivites*, the *Amorites*, and other nations all equally deſcended from *Ham*, whom God had curſed.

God could have placed *Abraham* any where elſe; but he choſe to bring him into a countrey, which the poſterity of *Ham* had ſeized upon already, rather than into a place poſſeſſed by the poſterity of *Japhet*, on purpoſe that the jealouſie might be the greater betwixt *Abraham* and the inhabitants of the countrey into which God had brought him.

Nevertheleſs God did not give him at firſt an entire poſſeſſion, but only promiſed him that his poſterity ſhould enjoy it, and in the mean while inveſted him beforehand, with a right to it, by the purchaſe of a field for a burying place, wherein his wife, himſelf, and his children were buried; by which means he ſtrongly fixed his own mind, and the hopes of his poſterity.

In ſhort, it is evident, that all the glory which *Jacob* found in *Egypt* when he was invited thither by *Joſeph*, did not make him forget the right which he claimed upon that land, by virtue of the ſepulchre both of his father and grandfather that was there. For *Moſes* informs us, that he deſired to be carried thither after his death, and that he did expreſly require

(*k*) Hæreſ. lxvi. n. 84.

quire this duty from *Joſeph* and his other children, who paid it in ſo very ſolemn a manner, and with a mourning ſo very great and famous, that the name of *Abel-Mizraim* continued to that very place, where the *Canaanites* ſaw the ſolemnization of that funeral by the ſons of *Jacob*, who were attended by great numbers of *Egyptians*.

One ſee's that *Jacob*'s children ſtill entertained the ſame hope: *Joſeph* ſolemnly engaged his children to carry his bones into the land of *Canaan*: and one may judge, that the other Patriarchs were not leſs ſolicitous to require the ſame office at the hands of their children, as St. *Stephen* (*l*) ſuppoſes it *Acts* VII. agreably to the common opinion of the *Jews*: all which ſhews, that *Abraham*'s poſterity had their hearts ſet upon his ſepulchre, as upon the pledge and ſecurity of God's promiſe, that they ſhould be once poſſeſt of that land where he was buried.

And as the carrying the body of *Jacob* into *Canaan*, ſufficiently ſhew'd what were the claims of the *Iſraelites*; ſo the ſame was very evident by their care in keeping themſelves unmixt with the *Egyptians*, all the time they ſojourn'd in *Egypt*. The ſplendor of *Joſeph* was a natural engagement for them to ſettle themſelves there for ever; beſides, their vaſt encreaſe forced them in a manner to it. For a long time the miſeries which they endured, invited them to ſeek the alliances of the *Egyptians* by marriages, and to mix themſelves with a people who were their maſters, and ſo to renounce hopes which appeared to be ſo very groundleſs. They ſeemed to have been warranted by *Joſeph*'s example, who had married an *Egyptian*. However, one never finds that they tried that method. One ſee's on the contrary, that there was little correſpondence between the *Hebrews* and *Egyptians* in their ſacred things: for the *Hebrews* ſacrificed to God the abomination of the *Egyptians*, that is, thoſe very things which the *Egyptians* worſhipped.

One ſee's afterwards, by the great number of *flocks* which they drove along with them at their going out of *Egypt*, that they had continued to follow the profeſſion of their anceſtors, who were ſhepherds, a very odious employment to the *Egyptians*.

One ſee's at laſt, that after the many miracles which *Moſes* wrought in the *Egyptian* court, that this people followed God's conduct, and went out of that countrey, to poſſeſs the land of *Canaan*, which none of them had ever ſeen, and yet they lookt upon the obtaining it as a bleſſing they could not miſs of.

There are ſeveral things very remarkable upon that ſubject.

The firſt is, that ſome *Egyptians* went out with the *Iſraelites* to dwell with them in the land of *Canaan*, which was done, not only that there might be ſome indiſputable witneſſes from among the enemies of God, of the truth, and greatneſs of the miracles which *Moſes* had wrought amongſt them, which alſo was a preſage of the calling of the *Gentiles* to the faith, by their inſertion into the body of the *Jews*: but alſo that there might be ſome witneſſes of the extraordinary affection which the people of *Iſrael* had for the land of *Canaan*, and of their claims to it by virtue of God's promiſe, that he would put them into poſſeſſion of it. For otherwiſe it is not a common thing that a colony of ſlaves ſhould be ſuffer'd to run away, much leſs that they ſhould perſwade their maſters to forſake their own

(*l*) *Jalkut. ex Siphre.* fol. 311. col. 2.

own countrey, and their ſettlements at home, to go and conquer another for them.

The ſecond remark is, that God made the *Jews* travel for forty years in the deſerts of *Arabia*, not only to make them forget any tyes they might have had to return again into *Egypt*, and to accuſtom them to depend wholly upon Divine providence; but alſo to redouble their deſires after the poſſeſſion of this land of promiſe.

It was for the ſame reaſon that God forbad them ſo ſtraitly either the mingling with, or the ſetling themſelves amongſt the *Midianites*, tho' *Moſes* had given an example by marrying *Sephora*; or the *Edomites*, or the *Iſmaelites*, or the *Moabites*, or the *Ammonites*, tho' all thoſe nations were deſcended from *Terah*, their common father, or from the Patriarchs.

In execution of which ſevere prohibition, God commanded the *Jews* to put all thoſe to the ſword who ſhould make any alliance with thoſe nations, as we have inſtance of it, *Numb.* XXIII. after the deſcription of *Balaam*'s propheſies.

And it could be for no other end, that he ſo ſtraitly charged the *Iſraelites* to cut off the *Hivites*, *Amorites*, and other nations of *Canaan* even to the women and little children; but in purſuance of his firſt deſign to prevent all mixture, of his people with thoſe nations, which without that extream rigour would infallibly and inſenſibly have come to paſs.

I know very well that God preſerved the *Gibeonites*, by ratifying that alliance, which gave leave to thoſe people tho' of the poſterity of *Ham*, to continue amongſt his own people in the land of *Canaan*; but tho' God did in effect preſerve the *Gibeonites* amongſt the *Jews*, yet he forced them to undergo the drudgery, and ſervile offices of the tabernacle, and that they might be kept, as unqueſtionable witneſſes of the *Hebrews* pretenſions, and of their miraculous conqueſt of the land of *Canaan*; for the continuance of that nation in the heart of the countrey, and their ſubmitting to the drudgery of carrying wood, and water for the uſe of the tabernacle, tho' they were at firſt of another religion, was, as I have obſerved already, a continual ſubject of admiration to the poſterity both of the *Jews* and of the *Gibeonites* themſelves.

CHAP. XIX.

That the Law tied the People of ISRAEL *to the Land of* CANAAN, *and by ſeveral other Means eſtabliſhed the Diſtinction betwixt Tribes and Families amongſt them.*

ONE may ſay, that one of the moſt effectual means which God uſed to fix his people to the land of *Canaan*, was the law which he gave them to meet thrice a year, and celebrate three ſolemn feaſts

feaſts together, which hardly gave them leave to travel far into other countreys, and engaged them every time they met, to renew in the publick acts of their religion the memory and the idea's of their hopes: and they conduced to this deſign of God in this manner.

Thoſe feaſts were celebrated at three times which were the moſt commodious ſeaſons of the year for travelling, betwixt the months of *March* and *October*: the celebration of the paſſover was upon the fourteenth day after the appearance of the moon in *March*: the pentecoſt was fifty days after, and the feaſt of the tabernacles laſted from the firſt to the tenth day of *September*.

In ſhort, the law which obliged the *Jews* to aſſiſt at the celebration of thoſe feaſts, required the appearance of all the males of twenty years of age and upwards, ſo very rigorouſly, that there was no diſpenſation; for all (without exception) were then obliged to appear. So that even during the diſperſions of their nation, the *Jews*, who lived out of *Judea*, aſſiſted always at the celebration of thoſe three feaſts with great care.

This was a viſible way of keeping the tribes of *Iſrael* diſtinct, by giving each of them a ſeparate portion in the land of *Canaan*, and by fixing them inſeparably to it; as the whole nation was in like manner diſtinguiſhed, by its being placed in a countrey entirely by it ſelf.

We ſee accordingly, that God hath obſerved that method, by giving a law which injoyns the diviſion of the land of *Canaan*, to be made into as many portions as there were tribes, only excepting the tribe of *Levi*, becauſe the *Levites*, as being the publick miniſters of their religion, were diſperſed amongſt the other tribes, that they might more conveniently attend to the inſtruction of the people.

I ſhall not here take notice of the miracle which was evident in that diviſion, which was an exact accompliſhment of the oracle which *Jacob* and *Moſes* uttered a little before their deaths.

But I ſhall obſerve, firſt, that as the deſign of God was to divide that people into tribes, that the tribe of *Judah*, from which the Meſſiah was to be born, might be the better diſtinguiſh'd and known, ſo he would, for the ſame reaſon, allot the cave of *Machpelah*, the ſepulchre of the Patriarchs, to the ſhare of the tribe of *Judah*, as alſo *Ephratah*, the place where *Rachel* was buried, which was afterwards call'd *Bethlehem*, the town where *David* had his birth, and which was foretold by the Prophet *Micha* under the name of *Ephratah*, as the place where the Meſſiah ſhould be born in the fulneſs of time.

We muſt beſides, take notice of two particular regulations, by which God fixed his people in the land of *Canaan*, and preſerved a diſtinct idea of this firſt diviſion of that countrey.

The firſt is the law of *jubilee*.

The ſecond is the law of lineal retreats.

In ſhort, by the law of the jubilee which returned every fifty years, and by which every one that could juſtifie his pedigree, was reinſtated in the poſſeſſions of his anceſtors: God obliged that people to keep up a diſtinct knowledge of the firſt diviſion made under *Joſhua* (*m*), and which is deſcribed in that book which contains his hiſtory, much more effectually than if he had made a law for that very purpoſe: ſo that tho' the

(*m*) Joſhua xiv. &c.

the field of *Ephratah* had been never ſo often alienated, yet it always returned to the tribe of *Judah*, and ſo afterwards into *David*'s family, becauſe it was at firſt the lot of his anceſtors.

This law of jubilee preſerved a diſtinct knowledge of the ſeveral tribes, and families, and it alſo kept up a diſtinct idea of their genealogies, which muſt be preſerved entire of neceſſity, that they might maintain their right to the inheritance of their anceſtors.

It would be to no purpoſe to object againſt this obſervation, that it was impoſſible to know certainly which tribe, and much leſs which family every eſtate did belong to, becauſe one ſee's that the firſt proſelytes who went out with the *Iſraelites*, ſhared the land of *Canaan* together with them; for one ſee's on the contrary,

Firſt, that God would not allow any of the *Moabites*, and *Ammonites* to become proſelytes before the tenth generation.

And ſecondly, that he debarred the *Edomites* from being admitted to make profeſſion of Judaiſm before the third generation, which excluded them for ever from any poſſeſſions in the land of *Canaan*.

And thirdly, one ought to obſerve the difference betwixt an *Egyptian* proſelyte, and a native *Jew*: the quality of a proſelyte, gave permiſſion to an *Egyptian* to live amongſt the *Jews*, and to profeſs their religion, but it gave him no right to poſſeſs any of their land.

And then beſides that, thoſe *Egyptian* proſelites had a particular way of praying by themſelves, different from that of the *Jews*, as the *Jews* ſtill teſtifie (*n*). They could not poſſeſs any eſtate in land amongſt them: this is ſo true, that it was once found neceſſary to make a particular regulation for the daughters of *Zelophehad* (*o*), that they might have their diviſion, which was granted only under certain conditions, becauſe the land was not to be divided, but amongſt the males of the people of *Iſrael*.

But this is very conſiderable, that by this law of the jubilee, God fixed the *Jews* to the land of *Canaan*, by giving the children a power to look upon themſelves, not only as the preſumptive heirs of their parents, but to conſider their parents only as *uſu-fructuary*'s, ſince all their poſſeſſions in land were ſo entailed, that the children, or right heirs of any man could not miſs of the reverſion, becauſe whatever alienation was made, it could laſt but for a time to the year of jubilee which reſtored all the alienated poſſeſſions, abſolutely and entirely to the right heirs.

Now that this law was always lookt upon as a fundamental law amongſt the *Jews*, appears clearly from the words in *Leviticus* (*p*), and from the hiſtory of *Naboth*, which holy man rather choſe to die than to comply with the injuſt deſire of *Ahab*, who would have forced *Naboth* to ſell his eſtate abſolutely notwithſtanding God's expreſs prohibition.

The exemplary vengeance which God took upon *Naboth*'s murder, and the relation of it recorded in Scripture is a further confirmation of this ſame truth: if a king of *Iſrael* durſt not at firſt infringe that law, if it was not violated by any other than *Jeſabel*, who was a forreign princeſs: if the tranſgreſſion of that law was puniſh'd in ſuch an exemplary manner,

(*n*) *Maſſa Biccour.* c. 1. §. 4.
(*o*) Numb. xxvii.
(*p*) Leviticus xxv. 23. 1 Kings xxi.

manner, who can doubt but that it was particularly obſerved in the tribe of *Judah*, as a fundamental law by which God tied up his people inſeparably to this very countrey.

One needs only make ſome few reflexions upon thoſe words which God makes uſe of *Ezek.* XLVI. to agree to what I ſay, if thoſe reflexions which I have made already upon *Naboth*'s murder be alſo added to them.

One may obſerve upon the ſame ſubject, that tho' God had ſeveral times ſubjected the *Jews* to a foreign power, yet he never ſuffered the whole nation to be all carried away out of *Canaan* at one time, nor yet to continue in captivity for the time of two whole jubilees; they were but ſeventy years in *Babylon*, which was the furtheſt place that they were ever carried into.

From whence we may naturally conclude, that their genealogies could not be confounded in ſo ſhort a time, becauſe many that were at the conſecration of the ſecond temple had ſeen the firſt. nor could the diſtinct knowledge of the ſeveral diviſions of their eſtates be obliterated; becauſe thoſe of every tribe who continued ſtill in the land, might viſibly keep them up.

And we here of neceſſity ought to obſerve in the firſt place, what we may read in the XXXII. Chapter of *Jeremiah* (*q*), concerning the ſale of a field which *Jeremiah* bought.

And ſecondly, what we read *Nehem.* the Vth where he is troubled to ſee the alienation of their fields, which was a conſequence of their miſery.

And thirdly, the manner how that people were reſtored to their eſtates, according to the fundamental laws of their ſtate.

Another very effectual means to fix that people to the land of *Canaan*, and to preſerve their families there certainly without confuſion, was the law of lineal retreats, which God inſtituted for this very purpoſe.

For in ſhort, when this rule was once laid down, that upon the failure of an heir in any family, that the next kinſman was the heir at law, it appears plainly, that every one was obliged for his own intereſt, to inquire with diligence into the genealogical lives of his own tribe, that he might inſtruct himſelf in the ſtate of the ſeveral families of his kindred, and of the ſeveral degrees of proximity of blood, whereby they might be related, becauſe the exact knowledge of theſe ſifts, and of thoſe ſeveral degrees of kindred were abſolutely neceſſary to make uſe of this right of lineal retreats.

There were two other laws which contributed alſo to this; one whereof regulated all that was to be done, when there were none but daughters left in a family, a famous inſtance of which, we have in the hiſtory of the daughters of *Zelophehad* ſet down twice by *Moſes* on purpoſe no doubt, that it ſhould be the more taken notice of, as I intend to ſhew particularly in another place.

The other law regulated all that the next kinſman of any one that died childleſs, was obliged to do in reſpect of the relict, and of the eſtate of the deceaſed, if he intended to redeem it. One finds in the book of *Ruth*,

(*q*) Jerem. xxxii.

Ruth, an illuſtrious example of the execution of this law, which may be found *Deuter.* XXV.

Now after all this, let any one judge, whether there could be any ſtronger ties than theſe to oblige the people of *Iſrael* to continue in the land of *Canaan*, and whither the diviſion which God made of it, betwixt their ſeveral tribes and families, was not an infallible means to diſtinguiſh them certainly one from another.

CHAP. XX.

That the Laws which MOSES *made concerning the State of Virginity, did principally relate alſo to the* MESSIAH, *which holds alſo as to ſeveral other Laws.*

HITHERTO I have ſhew'd the care which God took to diſtinguiſh his people of *Iſrael* from all other nations of the world, and I afterwards ſhew'd what care he took to keep the diſtinctions which he firſt ſet up amongſt the tribes. And I afterwards explained thoſe laws which he gave to oblige every family in each tribe to remain diſtinct. And I afterwards made it manifeſt, that the diviſion of the land of *Canaan* was a very proper means to execute this deſign of God.

All which ſhews, that God intended to make it eaſie for every man to diſtinguiſh the Meſſiah, when it ſhould be once known that he was to be born out of the family of *Jeſſe*, as it was afterwards foretold by ſeveral expreſs oracles.

But as there ought to be ſomething ſupernatural in the birth of the Meſſiah, who was to be born of a Virgin, ſo we ought to ſee what care God took in his laws, that the birth of the Meſſiah, even in this very article, might not be a fact too difficult to be acknowledged and eſtabliſhed.

In the firſt promiſe which God made to man in theſe words, *That the ſeed of the woman, ſhould bruiſe the ſerpent's head*, being joyned with *Iſaiah*'s propheſie, *Behold, a virgin ſhall conceive*, &c. *Iſ.* VII. It is viſible, that for the accompliſhment of theſe oracles, one ought to ſuppoſe, that the Meſſiah muſt be born of a virgin, as the Chriſtians profeſs to believe: Why ſhould God otherwiſe have taken care, to inſinuate from the very beginning of the world, that the Meſſiah was to be born of the ſeed of a woman, without mentioning any thing of a man, if he had not ſuppoſed, that he ſhould be born, without the operation of a man? And why ſhould *Iſaiah* propoſe the conceiving of a virgin, as an effect wholly ſupernatural?

In ſhort, God did therefore by his laws not only ſecure the ſtate of virginity, that this thing might not be ambiguous when it ſhould be accompliſhed, but (as we ſhall ſee here) he has by theſe laws made it extreamly illuſtrious.

Firſt, beſides that, God would have the puniſhment of death inflicted upon them that were at any time found guilty of ſins againſt nature, as alſo upon them, that ſhould be proved to have had any inceſtuous commerce with thoſe that were nearly related to them, and to whom either the nearneſs of blood, or of affinity, gave them a more free and familiar acceſs. He moreover, ſtraitly commanded, that all proſtitutes ſhould be put to death without any mercy (*r*).

Secondly, he is not only contented to forbid fornication and adultery in general, by condemning to death, thoſe that expreſly ſhould be convicted of it, and by awarding the ſame ſentence againſt him that ſhould happen to corrupt a contracted virgin, and the virgin her ſelf (*s*). But he alſo hinders men by two ways from falling into ſins of impurity, he permitted, on the one hand, a divorce where the wife did not pleaſe her huſband, and on the other hand he allowed of polygamy. This toleration made that virgins on the one ſide, not remaining too long unmarried were not apt to be eaſily corrupted, and on the other ſide men were not very forward to debauch thoſe women whom they did not intend to marry, or to keep when married, for he that was compelled to marry a virgin whom he had ſeduced, was expreſly forbidden to put her away for ever after (*t*).

It is natural to obſerve the deſign of thoſe laws amongſt the people of the *Jews* (*u*). In ſhort, the deſire of iſſue made them marry very young; moſt of the men were married at eighteen years of age.

Therefore all virgins thought it a ſhame to be unmarried; therefore God makes them ſpeak in the third of *Iſaiah*, in that manner, when ſeven women would marry one man, without aſking any thing for diet, or cloaths, provided only that he would take away that reproach of living without having children. 'Twas this deſire of poſterity, which made the women look upon barenneſs as a curſe.

Again, this vehement deſire of children made eunuchs to be regarded, as men particularly abhorred of God, not only by the *Jews*, but alſo by the Heathens themſelves (*x*): Altho' afterwards they paſſed for holy men, becauſe they deſigned to imitate what (as they were told) had happened to *Noah*, by his ſon *Ham*, which introduced the cuſtom amongſt the *Aſſyrians* of caſtrating themſelves, that they might be prieſts.

Thirdly, God commanded, that any virgin which was betrothed to a huſband, and was corrupted in her father's houſe, or that was raviſhed without calling for help, ſhould be puniſhed with death (*y*); ſo that all the virgins were indiſpenſably engaged for fear of loſing both life and honour together, to preſerve their virginity with all poſſible care.

But here is a fourth law concerning this matter, whereby God obliged the parents of all contracted virgins to take a more than ordinary care of them, when he commands *Deut.* XXII. 21. *That a virgin for whom the tokens of virginity were not found, ſhould be brought out of the door of her father's*

(*r*) Exod. xxii. Deut. xxii. Levit. xviii. Levit. xx. Deut. xxiii. 17.
(*s*) Exod. xxii. Levit. xx. Deut. xxii.
(*t*) Deut xxii. (*u*) *Maſſee. Aveth.* c. 5.
(*x*) *Lucian de Evnuch*, p. 537. *Lucian de Dea Syriâ.* p. 1069.
(*y*) Deut. xxii.

ther's houſe, and there be ſtoned to death by the men of the city, for ſo her parents were by that means, made partakers of the puniſhment of her crime, and their negligence, was ſeverely puniſh'd by ſuch a ſhameful execution as diſhonoured their whole family.

Fifthly, God ſubmitted women to the examination of their huſbands to whom they were married: nay, one would think that he intended to raiſe the jealouſie of huſbands, when he gives them leave to bring their wives to a publick tryal, and to puniſh them with death, when they did not preſerve the tokens of their virginity.

It was for that reaſon that he commanded (z), that the parents or near relations of the young married women thus complained of, ſhould produce upon all ſuch occaſions the tokens of the virginity of thoſe daughters which they diſpoſed in marriage, which was uſually done with many ſolemn circumſtances and formalities.

And here are three things, which deſerve to be attentively conſidered.

The firſt is the cuſtom that was amongſt the *Jews* for parents never to let their virgin daughters go out of their houſes, which cuſtom made them be called *concealed*, in oppoſition to thoſe that went abroad; that is, that were proſtitutes.

The ſecond is another cuſtom which the juſt deſire of preſerving the virginity of their daughters againſt all accidents, had introduced amongſt that people, which was, that all their virgins did wear a ſort of fetters, which are called in the *Talmud*, *cevalim*, which are deſcribed by the famous *Moſes*, the ſon of *Maimon*, in this manner: *Cevalim ſunt compedes in forma periſcelidis, inter quos interpoſuerunt catenulas, illis compedibus ornabant ſe virgines, ut non incederent paſſu magno, ne contigeret ipſis damnum in virginitate ſua* (a). This deſcription may be thought to be one of the fooliſh phancies of the modern *Jews*, if we did not meet with proofs of the practice of that cuſtom in more ancient times. In ſhort, one ſee's in the third of *Iſaiah*, that chains are reckon'd up amongſt other ornaments of the daughters of *Iſrael*, which God threatneth to take away from them, when he would force them to go captives into *Babylan*.

The third is an ancient tradition mentioned in the *Pirke Eliezer* in the XVI. Chapter, *Solent Iſraelitæ digito educere virginitatem, ne incidant in dubitationem vel ſuſpicionem, juxta illud*, ſumat pater, & mater puellæ, *&c.*

In a word, it ſeems, that for fear leaſt theſe tokens of virginity ſhould be thought to be obſcure and ambiguous by their huſbands, that God has provided for the ſecuring of the virginity of their young women before marriage by a miracle, the experience whereof was ordinary and common amongſt ſo jealous a people. I mean, the waters of jealouſie (b), which all women, whoſe carriage was ſuſpected by their huſbands, were obliged to drink, by which God did either miraculouſly juſtifie them, or elſe he began to inflict a puniſhment upon them, which was ſo much the more dreadful and exemplary, as it proceeded from the hand of God himſelf. This miracle laſted to the deſtruction of the ſecond temple, as the *Jews* themſelves tells us in that title of their *Talmud* (c), which concerns women ſuſpected of adultery.

However,

(z) Deut. xxii. (a) *Ad Maſſec. Sabbath.* c. 6. J. 4.
(b) Numb. v. *Joſeph.* l. 3. *Antiq.* p. 95. (c) *Sota* c. 9.

However, as God works no miracles without great reaſons, ſo he here made a law, the obſervance whereof was very rigorous, which was, that he would not ſuffer any women to be married when there was the leaſt probability, that they had their courſes, but that they ſhould be ſeparated at that time, as unclean.

This reaſon of this law was, becauſe it was then almoſt impoſſible, but that the lewd women might have impoſed upon their huſbands, in the marks of their virginity, which at that time are very uncertain; not to ſay, that as a politick law-giver, he might preſcribe the obſervation of this law, leaſt the common-wealth of the *Jews* ſhould have been overſtocked with weak, and ſickly people.

Laſtly, one ſee's that God himſelf has faſtned a blot upon leprous perſons, becauſe they were ſuppoſed to have been conceived when their mothers had their courſes (*d*): and hereupon was that law of God founded, which debarred lepers for ever from the right of coming into the congregations of his people.

One ought to make the ſame obſervation upon thoſe that were unlawfully begotten, for they were deprived of the right of entring into the congregation, and how innocent ſoever they were, as to the lewdneſs of thoſe who gave them their lives; yet they were thus with them made partakers of the puniſhment of their ſin.

If one conſiders all theſe ſeveral laws attentively, one ſhall find on the one hand, that ſeveral of them were of very little moment, except we ſuppoſe, that God intended to ſecure the ſtate of virginity by them beyond all danger: and on the other hand, one ſhall find that ſome of them are very ſevere about things, which do not ſeem to deſerve ſo terrible a rigour.

But if we conſider them according to God's deſign, as he hath afterwards particularly explained it. They will appear, I am confident, to be all very worthy of the wiſdom of ſuch a law-giver.

One needs only reflect upon that method of God, that I have now explained to ſee, that nothing can be conceived to be better managed, than this model according to the deſign which God himſelf had drawn.

One may make the ſame obſervations, and examine the ſame ſtroaks of the wiſdom of God, in ſeveral other precautions, which he made uſe of to make the Meſſiah be perfectly diſtinguiſh'd according to the ſeveral characters under which he was to be propoſed afterwards by the miniſtry of the Prophets.

One ſees, that the Meſſiah being to be born of a virgin, was to be a firſt-born, and for that reaſon, we find many laws which diſtinguiſh in general, the priviledges of the firſt-born.

So it appears by the XVIII of *Deuteronomy*, that the Meſſiah was to be a Prophet; and therefore, God afterwards gave notice by the Prophets of all thoſe lights which ſhould particularly appear in him. In proſpect of this, God gave by the miniſtry of *Moſes*, ſuch characters as would diſtinguiſh the true Prophets from thoſe who endeavoured to uſurp that name.

It appears alſo, that becauſe God was to communicate to the Meſſiah, a power

(*d*) *Iſidor. Pelus* l. 5. Ep. 117. *Joſeph. Antiq.* l. 3. p. 94.

a power of working miracles (which *Moſes* intimates, by ſaying, that he was to be a Prophet like unto him.) Therefore *Iſaiah* ſpecifies the character of thoſe miracles in XXXV. Chapter of his propheſie, and God explains in particular, the laws concerning the blind and the lame, and for the ſame reaſon, he gives an account of all ſorts of leproſie, that it might be diſtinctly known which was incurable.

It is eaſie to thoſe who will attend to the laws of *Moſes*, to ſee that they were ſubſervient to this deſign of God, in purſuance of thoſe proſpects which we have already ſet down.

CHAP. XXI.

That it was the Deſign of God by all theſe Ceremonies, and particularly by that Veneration which he inſpired the Jews *with, for the Tabernacle, to preſerve the Ideas of the Meſſiah, whom he had promiſed, in their Minds, by diſtinguiſhing them from all other Nations.*

AFTER all thoſe obſervations which I have made upon the ſeveral laws that God made uſe of to execute his deſign of fixing his people to a certain place, and there to keep them ſeparate; it is natural to judge, that the ceremonial laws which he gave them for the regulating their outward worſhip, were alſo intended for the ſame end. This I muſt ſhew in reſpect of the holineſs which God aſcribes to the land of *Canaan*, and in reſpect of the whole ſervice of the tabernacle, of its miſterious conſtruction in all its parts: and in reſpect alſo of the raiſing of the material temple afterwards, to be as it were the center of their whole religion.

It was certainly for this purpoſe, that he particularly conſecrated ſeveral things to himſelf, as the firſt fruits, and the firſt-born, and that he ſet apart certain times, as the firſt day of the month, and certain ſolemn feaſts, beſides the ſabbath-day, which was celebrated long before. And he alſo conſecrated ſeveral places, as the towns of refuge; and yet more particularly, the tabernacle and the temple: but it was eſpecially for that reaſon, that he had conſecrated certain rites and ceremonies, certain ſacrifices, both of animate and inanimate things, and certain offerings of gold, and ſilver, perfumes, *&c.*

One ſee's, that he rejected any firſt fruits that did not grow in the land of *Canaan:* one ſee's, that tho' ſome ſacrifices were common to the *Jews* and their neighbours, yet he diſtinguiſh'd them by ſo many circumſtances, that they were much different from the others: thus he forbids them to make uſe of ſtatues before which other nations uſed to ſacrifice at that time, and he commanded them not to ſacrifice upon high places, where the heathens uſed to make their offerings very early in the morning, at ſun riſe, which gave riſe to their worſhip of the riſing ſun.

But there is nothing more diſcovers the deſign of God, than the laws by which he fixed their worſhip, firſt to the tabernacle, and afterwards

to

to the temple, at the places where God did particularly reſide. One may ſay, that it was for that reaſon, God commanded the repreſentations of angels, and of his law, and of the manna to be preſerved there, all which beſides, that they were memorials of the ancient apparitions, and favours of God to that people, they were expreſs figures of God's glory, of his will, and of his miraculous power; he added alſo a candleſtick with ſeven branches, a table covered with loaves, and an altar of incenſe, which were figures of the ſeven planets of this viſible world, of the bleſſings which we enjoy by nature, and of thoſe acknowledgments which we owe unto God for all theſe: he commanded alſo, that none ſhould offer ſacrifices, in any other place except the temple.

He would not permit that any but thoſe who were purified according to the law ſhould enter into it, he excluded all uncircumciſed perſons for ever, as *Moſes* had formerly been commanded to pull off his ſhoes in the deſert, at his approaching to the burning buſh, ſo every one that entered into the temple was to enter barefoot, as a mark of that reſpect which had formerly been exacted of *Moſes*.

And what other reaſon but that, could oblige him to give both at the conſecration of the temple, and afterwards ſo many ſenſible marks of his preſence; that cloud which was called his glory reſted there. The *Urim* and *Thummim* which was an oracle for that whole nation, was there; there was a daily ſacrifice offered up for the whole people, there were celebrated the three ſolemn feaſts of the paſſover, of pentecoſt, and of tabernacles, he forbid them to ſacrifice any where elſe, and he gave frequent and illuſtrious oracles at that place.

One ought alſo to obſerve, that after his temple (to which all the glory of the tabernacle was tranſmitted) was fixed at *Jeruſalem*, he ordered it to be ſuch a ſenſible mark of his preſence, that when we read the hiſtory of *Iſrael*'s march in the deſart, we find, that the tabernacle was the image of the temple, and built after its model; ſo that as the tabernacle ſtood always in the midſt of the tents of the *Levites*, and the *Levites* in the midſt of the whole camp of all the tribes of *Iſrael*, who were all liſted under their proper ſtandards: ſo one ſee's afterwards, that the temple, the *Levites*, and the people of *Jeruſalem* were placed, according to their different degrees of holineſs, as they were to approach to the moſt holy place, which was the habitation of his holineſs.

Certainly, one may ſay, that the building up of a tabernacle, or of a temple, ſeems to be directly contrary to the nature of religion, according to which, God who is a ſpirit, will be worſhipped in ſpirit, and in truth: ſo that this ſeems to have been quitted for a time, when he commanded the building of a tabernacle.

But really there was nothing more agreeable to the deſign which God had formed at firſt, as to that people; he intended to make it viſible, and it appears, that nothing could be more effectual to make it ſo, than the double neceſſity to which that whole people was reduced to, to meet in a body ſeveral times every year in the ſame place, and to offer all their ſacrifices in the tabernacle, and to be there perpetually employed in the ceremonial ſervice, which did inſeparably draw them thither, and fix them there.

The end of all thoſe viſible aſſemblies, was to perpetuate the know-

ledge of the principal verities of their religion, and eſpecially to renew perpetually, the hopes of that people, as to the Meſſiah, who was promiſed to them from God.

For God having ſhortned the long lifes which men commonly enjoy'd in the beginning, before they went out of *Egypt*, ſo that five or ſix perſons could no longer preſerve the tradition of 2000 years, as they had done till *Moſes*'s time, God was of neceſſity obliged to make uſe of ſome other means to ſupply that defect.

He had already made uſe of ſeveral before, amongſt which, was that which we find preſcribed *Deut.* XXVII. where he ordered the building of an altar with rough ſtones, whereupon the names of the twelve tribes, and the whole law were to be ingraved.

He afterwards follow'd other methods, and thus we ſee, that *Samuel* following *Moſes* and *Joſhuah*'s example, repeats before a ſolemn aſſembly of the people met at *Gilgal*, for the conſecration of *Saul*, the things that came to paſs during the government of *Bedan* or *Sampſon*, of *Jephthah* and his own.

But yet the beſt way was to fix this people to one tabernacle, wherein we ſee that beſides the monuments which preſerved the memory of the great miracles that God had wrought at the foundation of the *Jewiſh* common-wealth, as the pot of manna, *Aaron*'s rod that bloſſom'd, the plates of the altar that had been made out of the cenſers of *Corah*, *Dathan*, and their confederates,

One ſee's, that the law, and the books of the covenant were depoſited there by God's order, and the principal tranſactions and deliverances that were wrought by God in the behalf of that people, were continually celebrated with hymns and other tokens of publick thankfulneſs.

It was, no doubt, upon this account, that he cauſed the book of the law to be laid up there, with many ceremonies and expiations; and that he enjoyned it to be read publickly in the preſence of the whole congregation every ſeven years: one ſee's, that he commanded, that every family ſhould read this book continually, and that all ſhould entertain their wives and children from their tendereſt years, with the deſign of the law, night, and day, in the countrey, and in the town, at all times, and in all places.

One ſee's, that God engaged them to it not only by an expreſs command, but alſo by an indiſpenſible neceſſity, becauſe he made it death for any man to violate any of thoſe ceremonial laws, from a principle of obſtinacy, no pardon could be obtained for the tranſgreſſions committed through ignorance, before they were expiated by certain ſacrifices, the forms whereof were ſcrupulouſly preſcribed in the law, and which could be violated upon no account whatever.

If one conſiders thoſe things, he may ſay, that the *Jews* had ſcarce one moment free in their lives, ſo preſſing was the neceſſity which lay upon them to conſult the law of God, the regulations of which were ſo very exact and particular, that there, no actions publick, or private, could happen, but what were regulated, and determined by thoſe conſtitutions.

If a beaſt was born, the owner was to examine whether it was the firſt-born,

firſt-born, or no, whither it was clean, or unclean, and whether it was to be redeemed, with ſeveral other things of this nature.

If a woman was big with child, there were many queſtions to be aſked: when ſhe came to lie-in, ſeveral very different ceremonies were practis'd, according as the child was a firſt-born, or not. The law enjoyned various purifications according as the woman brought forth, a ſon or a daughter.

God had preſcribed a great number of laws for all the accidents of life, for marriages, for ſucceſſions, for funerals, for mourning, for unforeſeen accidents, as the death of a man that was kill'd without the deſign of his murtherer, for the ſeveral crimes that might be committed, in their ſeveral pollutions, and ſequeſtrations, *&c.*

It ſeems, that this whole people, from the time that they came, to the uſe of their reaſon, to the time of their death, was ſtill continually obliged to keep up a correſpondence with the prieſts and *Levites*, whom God had for this purpoſe diſperſed amongſt all the tribes of *Iſrael*, and to conſult the law and the teſtimony to be inſtructed in the manner of governing themſelves: but particularly, they were to look upon the temple and the tabernacle, as the center of their whole religion: and how could they do this, without carrying their proſpect at the ſame time to thoſe great promiſes of the Meſſiah, of which the *Iſraelites* were depoſitaries: I ſay, upon thoſe promiſes, which raiſed up ſo many jealouſies betwixt their forefathers, and the anceſtors of thoſe neighbouring nations, with whom they had always ſome controverſie, and were to be conſidered as glorious and honourable to the whole nation.

CHAP. XXII.

That it appears by the Books of Moses, *that this whole Model which God had framed, was to laſt but until the Coming of the Meſſiah.*

BUT if we find in *Moſes*'s law a ſevere reſtriction in all that belongs to the execution of the promiſe of the Meſſiah (which ſhews, that God intended to have that nation diſtinguiſh'd from all others, till the bleſſed ſeed was come;) if we find, that he reſtrained that promiſe to one tribe, one town, one family, one particular individual perſon in that family, that they might not be to ſeek in a confuſed crowd of a whole people, made up of ſeveral millions of perſons, or in a whole tribe, or even in a city filled up with ſeveral families: if upon this account his birth was reſtrained to one people, one tribe, one little town, and one ſingle family which was ſetled there, the *Jews* could not but obſerve, that it was God's deſign to break all thoſe reſtrictions, and to follow quite another method, when the Meſſiah was once come.

For in the firſt place, the firſt promiſe of the Meſſiah, was expreſs'd in very general terms, which mentioned a common benefit to all the ſons of *Adam*. This promiſe was made before God had rejected *Cain*'s poſte-

rity, by preſerring that of *Seth*; it was made before the reſtriction was made to *Noah* in *Seth*'s family, and to *Shem* in *Noah*'s family.

Secondly, God, who by circumciſion had diſtinguiſhed *Abraham* and his poſterity from the reſt of the family of *Sem*, did expreſly promiſe to *Abraham*, that in his ſeed all the nations of the world ſhould be bleſſed: This promiſe was made alſo, before God had reſtrained the promiſe to the perſon *Iſaac* in prejudice of *Iſhmael*, and then afterwards to the perſon of *Jacob*, in the prejudice of *Eſau*.

Thirdly, one ſee's this ſame truth yet more clearly explained out of *Jacob*'s oracle concerning *Judah*, *Gen.* XLIX. wherein *Jacob* expreſly foretels, that the Meſſiah ſhould be the expectation of the nations; that is to ſay, the comfort, the glory, the hope, and the joy of all the nations of the univerſe.

As this was a capital truth, ſo God propoſed it by *Balaam*, at the *Iſraelites* entring into *Canaan*, that they might thus underſtand, that all thoſe diſtinctions, which their ſeparation living in *Canaan* from the reſt of the world, might keep up, were not always to laſt.

But this particularly appears out of *Moſes*'s law, which allows of ſeveral ſorts of proſelytes, receiving ſome without tying them to the obſervance of all the ceremonies in the law, which it would never have done, if it had been abſolutely neceſſary to be a *Jew* before they have a ſhare in the benefits of the promiſe.

Secondly, it ſuppoſes, that God was to remove that people out of *Canaan* into remote countreys, and to diſperſe them, as it were, into the uttermoſt parts of the world, which was done by Divine Providence, only to publiſh the promiſe of the Meſſiah, to eſtabliſh the belief in the Prophets, and ſo to facilitate the calling of the Gentiles to the faith.

Thirdly, he declares expreſly, as St. *Paul* obſerves, that he was to call his people, that which was not his people, that he might by that means provoke the people of *Iſrael* to jealouſie. This notion of jealouſie mentioned by St. *Paul*, deſerves to be taken notice of with very great care, if we reflect upon the ſpirit of jealouſie, which reigned amongſt the *Iſraelites*, and their neighbours.

I ſhall take notice in another place of the great number of oracles of *David* upon the ſame ſubject, altho' he otherwiſe inſults upon the *Moabites*, and *Edomites*, upon all occaſions, and ſhews as much averſion, and jealouſie againſt thoſe nations, as was poſſible for one that lived in a continual war with thoſe people.

I ſhall alſo make ſome reflexions upon *Solomon*'s marriage with the princeſſes of *Tyre*, of *Sidon*, and of *Egypt*; that is to ſay, with the poſterity of *Ham*, which was united to that of *Judah*, to take a part with them in the bleſſing; from whence it came to paſs, that the Song that was written upon that marriage, was preſerved as a piece divinely inſpired, and ought to be conſidered, as a happy preſage of the calling of the Gentiles to the communion of the Meſſiah.

One may alſo joyn here the manner of *Solomon*'s giving to *Hiram*'s ſubjects, who had helped him in the building of the temple, the countrey of *Chabul*, which was incloſed within *Judea*, altho' thoſe people were of the *Canaanites* poſterity, upon whom *Noah* had particularly pronounced, *Curſed be Canaan* (*e*).

One

(*e*) Gen. ix.

One may alſo ſee, that as God had permitted his people to be tranſported into *Chaldea*, and *Babylon*, and had raiſed up there Prophets amongſt them on purpoſe to acquaint the world with the glorious hopes of the *Jews*, ſo he cauſed the books of Scripture to be tranſlated into Greek about 300 years before our Saviour's birth, not only to prevent all ſuſpicion of falſhood in the minds of the Gentiles, if they were produced of a ſuddain after the birth of the Meſſiah, but alſo to inſtruct the Heathens by little and little of the right which all nations had as well as the *Jews* to that promiſe; that they might take their ſhare in it whenever they ſhould be invited to it by God, and eſpecially to take away the ſcandal which was to follow upon God's deſtroying the form of that commonwealth by the *Romans*, according to *Daniel*'s prediction.

All theſe things, no doubt, engaged the *Jews* who read the books of *Moſes* to make particular remarks upon them.

But they ought to have obſerved three things eſpecially: the firſt was, that altho' God had at firſt choſen their whole nation, yet he was pleaſed to diſperſe afterwards almoſt ten parts of thirteen; which plainly ſhew'd that this choice which he had made, was only an œconomical choice, and for a particular deſign.

The ſecond is, that altho' he was very ſevere and punctual in exacting obedience to the ceremonial ſervice, yet he had fixed the moſt part of their obſervances to certain places, to certain times, and to certain perſons: it was eaſie to judge, that when God bounded them in this manner, it was only for an œconomical ſervice preſcribed only upon a particular proſpect, which was one day to have an end.

The third is, that experience convinced them that altho' God ſeemed to have fixed his ſervice to the temple, yet he ſuffered the *Chaldeans* to deſtroy the firſt, and did not reſtore to the ſecond, the firſt marks of his preſence, when it was rebuilt by the order of *Cyrus*.

From whence it was natural to conclude, that ſuch a glory as retired by little and little from that place which God had choſen, was only deſign'd to be there for a time, till God ſhould extend his ſervice, by calling all the world to his religion, and ſo making the whole univerſe his temple, as we ſee it done in our days, by the calling of the Gentiles to the religion of our Saviour.

THE

THE PREFACE.

IN my Reflexions upon the Book of *Geneſis*, I have ſhewed the means God made uſe of to imprint the idea's of the Creation of the World, and the Promiſe of the Meſſiah, during that long tract of 2500 years, before the children of *Iſrael* departed out of *Egypt*, and before the hiſtory of it was penn'd by *Moſes*.

They that conſider that God at firſt preſcribed the law of the ſabbath, to fix the belief of the creation of the world, and that this law hath been conſtantly obſerved ſince the beginning of the world, until *Moſes*, and is ſtill to this day obſerved amongſt the *Jews*, eaſily apprehend, that this fact of the creation, could not be more inconteſtably proved, or more firmly grounded.

In like manner an attentive Reflexion upon the Oracles which I have mention'd, and which alone at firſt were the foundation and hope of the religion of the Patriarchs, and were afterwards recorded in the Book of *Geneſis*, is ſufficient to perſwade any one, that it was impoſſible, but the memory of the Promiſe of the Meſſiah, ſhould be deeply engraven in the minds of the *Iſraelites*, tho' we ſhould ſuppoſe, that the ſpirit of jealouſie, which God had raiſed amongſt the ſeveral pretenders to the execution of that great Promiſe, did not much contribute to preſerve the remembrance of it; as I have ſhown very carefully, that it was very uſeful for that purpoſe.

I have in my Reflexions afterwards proved upon the four laſt Books of *Moſes*, that God proſecuted the ſame deſign in the laws which he gave to the people of *Iſrael*, as well as in the peculiar forms and regulations of their government and religion; the great deſign of which rules, was only that the Meſſiah at his appearance in the world, might be unqueſtionably known.

Whoever ſhall read the Reflexions which I have made upon this matter, will eaſily perceive, that the long life of the Patriarchs, was of great efficacy, to make ſo freſh and lively an impreſſion of thoſe illuſtrious facts, the Creation of the World, and the Promiſe of the Meſſiah, that there was no need of very frequent Oracles to confirm the ſame, as indeed we find that in the ſpace of 2553 years, only five or ſix principal Oracles were given, which have a particular relation to the Meſſiah, as I ſhall ſhew afterwards.

Now

Now this Reflexion being once ſuppoſed, as the life of man was afterwards conſiderably ſhortned at the time of *Moſes*, ſo one may judge, that this Promiſe ought to be more frequently propoſed, and more clearly explained. And we ought to ſuppoſe that in proportion to the delaying of the Promiſe, and the ſhortneſs of mens lives which diſcouraged their hopes of ever ſeeing a Promiſe fufilled, which their anceſtors, whoſe lives were much longer, could never attain to the more diſtinct knowledge which God gave of this great object, was in order to ſtir up ſtrong deſires in the minds of the *Iſraelites*, as well as of the *Gentiles*, to whom God was afterwards to renew the ideas of it: and conſequently we find, that a greater number of Oracles and Propheſies, were required from time to time, to entertain and ſtrengthen the belief of a Promiſe, the accompliſhment whereof was ſo conſiderably deferred.

And indeed, this was exactly the method which God followed, the ſpirit of Propheſie having in a moſt illuſtrious manner been employ'd to preſerve the idea's of the Promiſe of the Meſſiah, and to increaſe them in the minds of the *Jews*, until the time of the accompliſhment it ſelf; and God hath ſo exactly ſet down by the Prophets, the ſeveral parts of his deſign, as there needs not be afterwards any difficulty in diſcerning the proſecution of that deſign which he had formed at firſt.

I intend in this third part of my Reflexions on the writings of the Old Teſtament to explain this method which God hath followed, in ſhewing how he hath accommodated himſelf to the ſtate of the *Jews*, whom he had made the depoſitaries of his Oracles, and proportioned them to their underſtanding and deſires.

For the more happy execution of this deſign, and a clearer diſcovery of this conduct of God, which ſeems ſomewhat obſcured, by intermixing theſe predictions concerning the Meſſiah, with a great number of events, during that ſeries of ages, whereof we have the hiſtory written by his own order: I think my ſelf obliged firſt of all to explain the reaſons why God was pleaſed to interweave the Oracles which relate to the Meſſiah, with other matters, that ſeem to be of a very different nature; and then ſhall lay down the rules which one ought to follow, in applying the ancient Propheſies to the Meſſiah.

After theſe preliminary Reflexions I ſuppoſe, that in order to a fuller diſcovery of the ſeries of God's deſign, and a more diſtinct knowledge of the progreſs of the revelation of this matter, that I ought again to reſume, and to ſet before the eyes of the Reader, the five or ſix principal Oracles which God hath given concerning the Meſſiah, from the beginning of the world to *Moſes*, together with that Oracle which he uttered by the mouth of that illuſtrious legiſlator.

One will eaſily judge without my undertaking to prove it, that the idea's of theſe Oracles were familiar to the *Jews*, until *David*, during the ſpace of 400 years, after which God began to diſcover the ſame more particularly, in chooſing *David* to be the perſon, in whoſe family that Prophecy ſhould be accompliſhed, becauſe the Meſſiah was to be born of his ſeed.

And ſo I ſhall immediately paſs on to the conſideration of thoſe Oracles which *David* himſelf uttered on this ſubject, which deſerve ſo much the more

more attention, becauſe God, who at that time changed the government of the *Jews*, did conſiderably augment the idea's which the ancients had concerning the Promiſe of the Meſſiah.

Laſtly, I ſhall collect under certain heads thoſe Oracles which were uttered by the Prophets concerning the Meſſiah, ſome hundred of years before the captivity of the *Jews* in *Babylon*, and ſoon after; and foraſmuch as the light concerning this matter was at that time much increaſed, and the Oracles themſelves are much more clear and diſtinct, as giving many more particular characters of the Meſſiah, ſo I ſhall content my ſelf briefly to touch upon them, in following the principal characters which they give concerning the Meſſiah.

After which I ſhall have nothing elſe to do, but to make ſome Reflexions upon the ſtate of the *Jews*, from the time of the laſt of the Prophets, until that wherein the Chriſtians pretend that this Promiſe and theſe Oracles were accompliſhed in the perſon of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Tho' the multiplicity of the things which I am to handle, and which I intend to do with the greateſt briefneſs that is poſſible, might ſeem to oblige me to omit the examining the ſucceſſion of the hiſtory of the *Jews*; yet God having been pleaſed to intermix the hiſtory of the *Jews*, and many other tranſactions, with theſe Prophecies, it obligeth me in this third part to make alſo ſome Reflexions upon the Hiſtorical Books of the *Old Teſtament*. And indeed, this will be of great uſe to prove the truth of theſe Oracles, and the manner how God hath conſtantly followed that draught, which he at firſt form'd to himſelf; as alſo to make it appear, that notwithſtanding the different revolutions of the Jewiſh commonwealth, he hath always continued thoſe means, which he choſe at firſt, to facilitate the diſtinct knowledge of the Meſſiah, whenever he ſhould appear.

It is very neceſſary to explain this ſeries of the deſign of God, to make the authority of theſe Prophecies more firm and unmoveable; thoſe laws, the obſervation of which ſerved to diſtinguiſh the family of *Judah*, and that of the Meſſiah, being ſo many boundaries and limits, within which God was pleaſed to confine himſelf, that his conduct in this matter might be the more eaſily obſervable and known.

And foraſmuch as in my Reflexions upon the Books of *Moſes*, I have begun by the firm eſtabliſhment of the truth of thoſe Books, on which I made my reflexions, without which that work would have wanted all its ſtrength; ſo I intend alſo in this part to follow the ſame rule, and accordingly I ſhall at firſt eſtabliſh the truth of the Hiſtorical and Prophetical Books of the *Old Teſtament*: for if one ought to prove that theſe Prophecies were well known and very famous, then it will be expected from me that I ſhould ſolidly demonſtrate the truth of thoſe Books in which thoſe Oracles are recorded, before I can of right conclude that the facts which are related by other authors, are the accompliſhment of theſe Prophecies.

This deſign would naturally engage me to prove the truth of every one of theſe Books in order particularly; but as I have not only proved the truth of the Books of *Moſes* already, but that moreover I intend in my Reflexions on the Books of the *New Teſtament*, to demonſtrate the truth

truth of them beyond all conteſt; and beſides, that the Hiſtorical and Prophetical Books of the *Old Teſtament* are ſo eſſentially linked with thoſe of *Moſes*, and the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, that it is impoſſible to acknowledge the truth of the one, without owning at the ſame time the truth of the others, I believe I may be diſpenſed with, as to the proving the truth of every Book of the *Old Teſtament* in particular; and therefore becauſe I intend to be very ſhort; I will confine my ſelf to ſome general Reflexions upon thoſe Books of the *Old Teſtament*, which were writ ſince *Moſes*, but ſuch, as I hope, will be ſufficient to ſatisfie an equitable and intelligent Reader.

REFLEXIONS

REFLEXIONS

UPON THE

HISTORICAL AND PROPHETICAL BOOKS

OF THE

OLD TESTAMENT,

TO

ESTABLISH THE TRUTH

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

CHAP. I.

That there is in the Hiſtorical Writings of the OLD TESTAMENT, *an uninterrupted Series of Events, which have a natural and neceſſary Dependance for more than ten Ages.*

THE firſt general proof which I make uſe of to Eſtabliſh the Truth of the Hiſtorical Books of the Old Teſtament, after *Moſes*, may be lawfully drawn from the uninterrupted ſeries of events, which are related by thoſe authors who have written the Hiſtory of the State and Church of *Iſrael*.

We may obſerve ſeveral conſiderable *epocha's* of this hiſtory, which takes in about one thouſand and forty years.

The

The firſt part takes in all that happened after *Moſes* 'till the eſtabliſhment of the kingdom, which is related in the books of *Joſhua*, *Judges*, *Ruth*, and the firſt book of *Samuel*.

The ſecond contains the hiſtory of the kings of *Juda* and *Iſrael*, 'till the deſtruction of *Samaria* and *Jeruſalem*.

The third contains an account of what paſſed during the *Jewiſh* captivity, and after their re-eſtabliſhment.

Now there is not one of theſe books which concern the hiſtory of this people, in one or other of theſe *epocha's*, which has not certain characters of the truth of its relations, by the neceſſary connexion which it has either with thoſe events which went before it, or with thoſe which follow'd it, and this by a natural and immediate dependance. This ought to be confirm'd by ſome obſervations.

The book of *Joſhua*, which contains the conqueſt, and diviſion of the land of *Canaan*, is the execution of *Moſes*'s deſign, who brought the people of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, to go and make themſelves maſters of a countrey, which the *Jews* pretend that God promiſed to *Abraham*. The diviſion of this land amongſt the tribes, is the title which each tribe had to its poſſeſſions in it; and this diviſion ſubſiſted a great while very diſtinct, and well known by the ſeveral tribes of this people. There happened no conſiderable change, but only when the kings of *Aſſyria* carried the ten tribes into captivity, after the taking of *Samaria*, in the three thouſand two hundred and eighty third year of the world: the country continuing in the ſame ſtate, under the two remaining tribes, without any change enſuing upon their tranſportation into *Babylon*, as I have obſerved in the nineteenth chapter of my Reflexions upon *Exodus*, and the following books.

This book has a very natural influence upon the following books, as is manifeſt from the hiſtory of the alliance which the *Gibeonites* got from the *Jews* by ſurprize. It ſerves for a foundation to all that happened for four hundred and thirty years after, in *David*'s reign, under whom the commonwealth, being already changed into a monarchical government, had in all appearance undergone a great alteration.

The book of *Judges* has an eſſential relation to the books of *Moſes* and *Joſhua*, the moſt part of the captivities of the people of *Iſrael*, being a conſequence of their quarrels with the nations which they had ſubdued, or with their neighbours, as the *Moabites* and *Ammonites* deſcended from *Lot*, who were jealous of this people that was deſcended from *Abraham*.

There we may ſee, for inſtance, the *Iſraelites* upon the defenſive part, becauſe God forbad them to ſet upon the *Moabites*, and the *Ammonites*; whereas theſe laſt pretended that *Iſrael* had uſurped ſome part of their country.

It muſt be granted, that there is nothing ſo remarkable as the actions of theſe judges, whom God raiſed up to deliver his people from thoſe different captivities, through which they paſſed for three hundred fifty ſix years together. But we may find the memory of ſome of them preſerved by thoſe publick hymns which were famous throughout the nation, and by theſe illuſtrious monuments of their judicial authority, which were preſerved amongſt them, and which kept up a remembrance of them amongſt the *Iſraelites*, and the neighbour nations.

For

For this ought to be obſerved with care, that ſince the *Jews* could not invent any thing upon this head, which would not be well known by all the neighbouring nations, as the *Tyrians*, who kept up their own government 'till *Alexander*'s time, who ſubdued them intirely, and the *Moabites*, whoſe empire continued for fourteen ages after *Lot*'s time, until the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, it was not eaſie for any fabulous relations in this matter, to obtain authority.

The book of *Ruth*, ſeems not to have any thing conſiderable, but the converſion of *Ruth* a *Moabiteſs*, who rely'd upon the hopes of the houſe of *Juda*, out of which ſhe had marry'd her huſband. But we may take notice of three things beſides; 1. Of the exact practiſe of that law which obliged them to marry the widow of a relation who dy'd without iſſue: 2. Of their lively remembrance of the deeds of their anceſtors, as of *Juda*'s inceſt with *Thamar*, which was look'd upon however, as a fountain, and a pattern of bleſſings. 3. Of the lineage of *David*, whom this author repreſents as deriving his pedigree from a *Moabiteſs*, which not making much for the honour of a king of *Iſrael*, do's at the ſame time confirm the truth of the relations which are contained in that book.

The firſt book of *Samuel* contains the hiſtory of *Eli*'s and *Samuel*'s judicatures, of the change of the government from a commonwealth to a monarchy under *Saul*, of *David*'s anoynting, *Saul*'s rejection and death.

The ſecond contains the hiſtory of *David*, his victories, his deſign of building a temple, a deſign which God left to *Solomon* to execute, his wars with the *Ammonites*, his crime with *Bathſhebah*, his ſon *Abſalom*'s inſurrection againſt him, and his great ſucceſſes againſt his enemies. There is nothing in theſe two books, which has not an exact connexion with what went before, and what follows. One ſee's throughout, an exact relation to the law of *Moſes*; one ſee's throughout, monuments ſet up in ſeveral places, to preſerve the memory of particular actions; one ſee's alſo in the wars of the *Iſraelites* with their neighbours, a conſtant ſeries of thoſe old differences, which were the fruits of the jealouſie of theſe nations againſt the children of *Iſrael*.

The books of the *Kings*, which the *Jews* reckoned but as one book, contain an abridgment of *Solomon*'s eſtabliſhment in the place of *David*, of the glory of his empire, which was carried by *David* to the banks of *Euphrates*, according to the ancient prophecyes, of his marriage with the king of *Egypt*'s daughter, of the building of the temple, and his own palace, with the help of *Hiram* king of *Tyre*; one ſee's the manner of the queen of *Sheba*'s viſit to *Solomon*, of his alliances with the *Moabites*, the *Ammonites*, the *Edomites*, the *Zidonians*, and the *Hittites*; thinking by theſe marriages to have put an end to the old quarrels between his people, and theſe nations, who were jealous of the people of *Iſrael*. All this was done in the forty years of *Solomon*'s reign; and as there never was ſo famous a reign in *Judea*, ſo never was there any, of which there are left ſo many monuments, as well there, as in the neighbouring countreys.

One ſee's afterwards in the ſame book, the diviſion of *Solomon*'s empire into two governments, that of *Juda*, which continued from *Solomon*'s

mon's death, during the reign of eighteen ſucceſſors, for three hundred eighty ſix years, to the taking of *Jeruſalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*; and that of *Iſrael* form'd by *Jeroboam*, which laſted two hundred fifty four years, under the reign of nineteen ſucceſſors, until the taking of *Samaria* the capital city of the kingdom of *Iſrael*.

The hiſtory of the *Chronicles*, which was written about twenty ſix years after that of the *Kings*, carries the hiſtory down to *Cyrus* the founder of the empire of *Perſia*, who gave the *Jews* their liberty again. The books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* contain the hiſtory of what paſſed under his ſucceſſors, to the time of *Artaxerxes* for almoſt eighty two years.

It was in this interval that the deliverance happened which the *Jews* received under *Eſther*, wife to one of the moſt powerful kings of *Perſia*, the memory of which the *Jews* celebrate every year in all places, the thirteenth and fourteenth days of the month *Adar*, (which anſwers to our *February*) by virtue of *Eſther*'s law.

After theſe general remarks with which I ſhall content my ſelf at preſent, I ought to make ſome reflexions, which cannot be omitted without taking away a great deal of force from thoſe proofs which eſtabliſh the truth of this matter.

The firſt is, that as theſe hiſtories have a neceſſary relation to the laws of *Moſes*, ſo they could not have been neglected by a people, who in their religious and civil conduct, were abſolutely regulated by thoſe very laws.

The ſecond is, that all the actions related in this hiſtory, have paſſed altogether in the boſom of a people, the extent of whoſe country is not twenty leagues in breadth, nor eighty in length.

The third is, that this people having obſerv'd the law of the ſeventh year, and of the firſt year, or year of jubilee, (which law you have in the twenty fifth of *Leviticus*) from their firſt conqueſt and diviſion of the country, forty ſeven years after their coming out of *Egypt*. This obſervation has ſerv'd for a double cycle, to fix the remembrance of thoſe actions, and to make it paſs from one generation to another. And ſo, the greatneſs of that promiſe which God made to *Hezekiah*, (*Eſai.* XXXVII. 30. and II *Kings* XIX. 29.) may eaſily be underſtood; that altho' *Sennacherib*'s invaſion would in all probability lay waſte all *Judea*, yet they might eat the fruits of the earth in quietneſs, the fourteenth year of *Hezekiah*, and the next year they ſhould eat the fruits that would grow up of themſelves without tillage, and that on the ſixteenth year they ſhould have liberty to till the ground, as formerly; which ſhews, without any force upon the words, that the fifteenth year of *Hezekiah*'s reign, was the ſabbathical year, in which the *Jews* were forbidden to cultivate the ground.

The fourth is, that it appears in effect by the ſeries of this whole ſtory, that things were written ſo, as to agree with the publick records which were extant amongſt the people: this is manifeſt, if we conſider how often the ſacred penmen refer us to the hiſtories and annals of thoſe kings of whom they ſpeak, and of whom they only quote the principal ſtories in ſhort in purſuing their deſign, which was intirely to bring an

account of the ſtate of the religion and the government of the *Jews* and *Iſraelites*, under one view.

Let us go on to other proofs to eſtabliſh this truth.

CHAP. II.

That there is a ſtrict Connexion between the Sacred Hiſtory, and the oldeſt Monuments which we have of Prophane Hiſtory.

AS there was but few very ancient writers of Prophane Hiſtory, and as we have but ſmall fragments of them diſperſed here and there, preſerved for the moſt part by the care of *Joſephus* the Jewiſh hiſtorian, and of *Euſebius* in his books *De Præparatione Evangelicâ*, ſo we ought not to be ſurprized, if but few of the more illuſtrious paſſages and events of the Jewiſh hiſtory be taken notice of by Pagan writers. The people of *Iſrael* being otherwiſe engaged by the obſervation of the *Moſaick* law, to keep cloſe to that country where it was eſtabliſhed, this made their neighbours have leſs knowledge of their hiſtory.

However, there is enough left to ſhew with how great fidelity and exactneſs the ſacred writers penned the hiſtory of their own nation: in ſhort, we may find amongſt the Heathen hiſtorians and poets, (who were their firſt hiſtorians,) ſeveral relations which ſhew that the matters of fact related by the ſacred writers, were well enough known to them, and in the ſame manner that they are related in thoſe hiſtorical books which were writ after *Moſes*.

The memory of *Joſhua* and his conqueſts was famous amongſt the Heathens: there are ancient monuments extant which prove that the *Carthaginians* were a colony of the *Tyrians*, who eſcaped from *Joſhua*; as alſo that the inhabitants of *Leptis* in *Africa*, came originally from the *Zidonians*, who forſook their country, becauſe of the miſeries which afflicted it.

The fable of the *Phœnician Hercules* aroſe from the hiſtory of *Joſhua* (*f*); the overthrow of the giants, and the famous *Typhon*, owe their original to the overthrow of *Og* the king of *Baſhan*, and of the *Anakims*, who were called giants (*g*).

The tempeſt of hail ſpoken of in the eleventh of *Joſhua*, was transformed by the poets into a tempeſt of ſtones, with which, as they ſay, *Jupiter* overwhelmed the enemies of *Hercules* in *Arim*, which is exactly the country where *Joſhua* fought with the children of *Anak*.

One finds the memorial of the actions of *Gideon* preſerved by *Sanchoniathon* a *Tyrian* writer, who lived ſoon after him, and whoſe antiquity is atteſted by *Porphyry*.

One

(*f*) *Procop. Vandalicorum* lib. ii. c. 10.
(*g*) *Polybius Frag.* cxiv. *Saluſt. de Bello Jugurthino.*

One finds in the manner of *Jephtha*'s ſacrificing his daughter after his victory over the *Ammonites*, the original of the ſacrificing of *Iphigenia*, it being uſual with the Heathens, as *Ælian* judiciouſly obſerves (*h*), to attribute to their later hero's the glory of the actions of thoſe who lived long before.

We have an account of a feaſt which was obſerved by the Heathen *Romans* in *April*, the time of the Jewiſh harveſt, in which they let looſe foxes with torches faſtned to their tails, which certainly came from the ſtory of *Sampſon*, and was brought into *Italy* by the *Phœnicians* (*i*).

One finds in the ſame hiſtory of *Sampſon* and *Delilah*, the original of the ſtory of *Niſus*, and his daughter, who cut off thoſe fatal hairs, upon which the victory depended (*k*).

Nicolaus Damaſcenus has preſerved the account of the victory which *David* obtained over the *Syrians* of *Zoba*, upon the banks of the *Euphrates*, as it is deſcribed by the ſacred writers (*l*).

There are monuments extant which deſcribe the part which *Hiram* king of *Tyre* had in the building of the temple of *Solomon*, almoſt the ſame with the account which the ſacred authors give us of his part in the erection of that great work.

One finds in *Herodotus* an account of the taking of *Jeruſalem* by *Seſoſtris* king of *Egypt*, as it is deſcribed in the hiſtory of *Rehoboam* (*m*).

One finds the hiſtory of the kings of *Syria* related by *Nicholaus Damaſcenus* in the ſame manner as it is deſcribed by the ſacred writers, when they give us an account of the victories which the kings of *Syria* obtained over the kings of *Samaria*.

One finds that the ſtory of *Phæton* is ſolely founded upon the tranſlation of *Elijah* in a chariot of fire (*n*).

All that I have taken notice of happened before the time of the firſt *Olympiad*, from whence the learned *Varro* has obſerved, that the firſt knowledge of hiſtory began amongſt the *Greeks*; whence alſo it is that they call all the precedent time fabulous, the *Greeks* having before nothing but fables, into which they had turned whatever ancient hiſtory they were acquainted with.

Since that time, we do not find fewer marks of the truth of the ſacred hiſtories.

One ſee's in the Pagan writers the reign of *Tiglah-Pileſer*, who is the ſame with the younger *Ninus*; as alſo the deſtruction of the *Syrian* monarchy by his means, as it is deſcribed to us in the ſacred hiſtorians. *Nicholas Damaſcenus* in *Joſephus*, *Antiq. Lib.* VII. *cap.* 6.

One ſee's amongſt the heathens, the ſucceſſion of *Shalmaneſer* as it is deſcribed in the Scriptures (*o*).

One ſee's the manner of *Sennacherib*'s conquering the moſt part of the towns

(*h*) *Variæ Hiſtoriæ* lib. v. cap. 3.
(*i*) *Ovid Faſtorum* lib. iv. (*k*) *Ovid Metam.* lib. viii. fab. i.
(*l*) *Joſeph. Antiq.* lib. vii. cap. 6.
(*m*) *Joſeph. Antiq.* lib. vii. cap. 6.
(*n*) II Kings ii. (*o*) *Caſtor in Euſeb.*

towns of *Paleſtina*, of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, deſcribed in heathen writers, particularly as we have it in the Scriptures (*p*).

The manner of *Sennacherib*'s ſucceſſion to *Shalmaneſer*, of his deſolating the country of *Paleſtine* while he carried on his victories, is deſcribed by the Heathens, *Herodot. Lib.* II. & *Beroſus in Joſephus Lib.* X. *c.* 1. exactly as the ſacred hiſtorians relate it.

The memory of *Tirhakah* king of *Æthiopia*, as of a great conqueror, is preſerved amongſt the heathens (*q*); for it was his coming, in ſhort, which obliged *Sennacherib* to riſe from before *Libnah*, whence he intended to go and beſiege *Jeruſalem*.

One finds amongſt the Heathens the remembrance of the manner of the deſtruction of all *Sennacherib*'s army, for his blaſphemies againſt God, which the *Egyptians* diſguiſed to appropriate to themſelves. *Herodot. Lib.* II. *cap.* 141.

One finds the ruin of *Aſhdod* by king *Pſammeticbus* deſcribed by Heathen authors, as we have it in the ſacred Scriptures. *Herod. Lib.* II. (*r*).

One finds an account of the ways by which the *Medes* loſt the *empire of Aſia* under *Cyaxares*, after his conqueſts over the *Aſſyrians* in the Heathen writers, much the ſame as it is deſcribed in *Nahum* II. 5.

The account of the taking of *Nineve* by *Nabopalaſſar*, and by *Aſtyages*, is much the ſame in Heathen authors (*s*) with the deſcription of it in *Nahum*, *Iſaiah*, and *Ezekiel*.

The manner of *Joſia*'s undertaking a war againſt *Pharaoh-Necho* king of *Egypt*, when he was overthrown in the plains of *Megiddo*, as it is deſcribed by the Heathens (*t*), agrees with the relation which are given of it in the holy Scriptures.

The victories of *Nebuchadnezzar* over the *Egyptians* and the *Jews*, the carrying away of the conſecrated veſſels of the temple, and of the *Jews* to *Babylon* (*u*), are deſcribed by the Heathens.

The manner of the yielding up of *Tyre* to *Nebuchadnezzar*, as they deſcribe it (*x*), agrees with what *Ezekiel* ſays *Chap.* XXVIII. 18, 19.

One finds in Heathen authors an account of the ſtately building of *Babylon* by *Nebuchadnezzar* (*y*), which is deſcribed exactly in the Scriptures.

One finds alſo in them (*z*), that the death of *Pharaoh-Hophra* or *Vaphres* as they call him, happened according to *Jeremiah*'s predictions, *Chap.* XLIV. 30.

One finds alſo the taking of *Babylon* by *Cyrus* (*a*), as it is deſcribed by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, *Chap.* LI. 46.

One finds alſo that the death of *Belſhazzar* (*b*) happened exactly as *Daniel* had deſcribed it, *Chap.* V.

One

(*p*) *Menander* apud *Joſeph.* lib. ix. cap. ult.

(*q*) *Strabo* lib. i. & xv.

(*r*) *Herodot.* lib. i. cap. 104. lib ii. cap. 1. lib. vii. cap. 10.

(*s*) *Alexand. Polyhiſtor.* ap. *Syncellum.*

(*t*) *Herodot.* lib. ii. (*u*) II Kings xxiii. 29, 30.

(*x*) *Annal. Phœnic.* ap. *Joſeph.* lib. i. contra *Apionem.*

(*y*) *Beroſ. Abyden.* (*z*) *Herodot.* lib. ii. cap. 163. & 169.

(*a*) *Herodot.* lib. i. cap. 178. (*b*) *Xenophon. Hiſtor.* lib. vii.

One ſee's there an account of *Xerxes*'s great undertaking againſt *Greece* (c), as *Daniel* had foretold it, *Chap.* XI.

Here then is an agreement which is perfect enough in ſeveral articles, to which we might add a greater number, if we had a greater number of Pagan hiſtorians: but as we cannot find after the reign of *Artaxerxes Longimanus*, hiſtories amongſt the *Jews* of equal authority with thoſe which were written by and after *Moſes*, as *Joſephus* the Jewiſh hiſtorian obſerves; ſo we cannot compare the Jewiſh and Pagan hiſtories together afterwards, in that form we have done hitherto.

But it is eaſie to obſerve four things, which are very conſiderable, upon this head.

I. That the credit of the ſacred hiſtorians may be grounded upon the great number of remarks we have made already, or elſe nothing will ever eſtabliſh it. For how can we conceive that all ſorts of hiſtorians of all nations and all ages, *Babylonians*, *Aſſyrians*, *Tyrians*, *Egyptians*, and *Greeks*, could agree ſo exactly with the *Jews* in thoſe facts they relate, if the Jewiſh authors had not exactly follow'd the rules of truth?

II. That as the prophecies of *Zechariah* and *Daniel* deſcribe, with an almoſt incredible exactneſs the conſiderable events which happened in the countries near to *Judea*, and in *Judea* it ſelf, in a time which was not expired until the ſacred writers had given over writing amongſt the *Jews*, ſo there was need of almoſt nothing elſe, but to look over the books of *Daniel*, to ſee what happened from day to day. And here we may obſerve, that the reaſon why *Porphyry* thought the book of *Daniel* was forged after the time of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, was becauſe this book ſeem'd to him to be rather a hiſtory than a prediction, which he juſtify'd in making a ſort of commentary upon this prophecy, by comparing with it the Pagan hiſtorians which were then extant.

III. That as the Jewiſh commonwealth came under the power of the *Greeks*, who were maſters of learning, and of the art of writing hiſtories, ſo there is little need of any other witneſſes beſide the *Greek* authors, as *Joſephus* demonſtrates, in effect, by proving that the *Greeks* were well enough acquainted with the affairs of the Jewiſh nation.

IV. That we do really find after the time of *Artaxerxes*, a very great part of the Jewiſh hiſtory compoſed by the care of ſome particular men, with ſufficient exactneſs, tho' it be not of equal authority with the ſacred writers.

CHAP. III.

That there is an uninterrupted Series of Events foretold by the ſacred Oracles, of which we may ſee a very great Number accompliſhed in every Age.

AS we may very reaſonably ſay, that all the hiſtory of the people of *Iſrael*, has a very exact dependence upon the writings of that famous legiſlator; ſo we may alſo obſerve, that there are ſcarce any

(c) *Herod.* lib. vii. cap. 5, 6.

any considerable events which make up the body of this history, which do not deserve a particular remark, either as a fulfilling of *Moses*'s prophecies, or of those other Prophets whom God raised up after him to reform the errors of that nation. And it is a very considerable thing, that in all the series of events foretold by the Prophets, there was not one generation amongst all the offspring of the people, but what saw the accomplishment of several of these oracles. A little attention and care in comparing the chronology of the oracles with that of the events, will sufficiently justifie what I say. I shall content my self with observing their different orders, which will satisfie a judicious reader, since my design do's not engage me necessarily to do a thing which would carry me too far, and which may be done with little application.

We may consider four sorts of oracles; 1. Those which have respect to particular facts nigh at hand. 2. Those which have respect to particular facts, but at a greater distance. 3. Those which have respect to facts which belong to the whole Jewish nation. 4. Those which have respect to facts which belong to foreign nations, either bordering upon *Palestina*, or further from it. Now there is nothing so exactly fulfilled, as these four sorts of oracles.

You have, for particular facts, which were nigh at hand, and foretold by the Prophets, the oracle of *Moses* concerning the advancement of *Joshua*, and the conquest of *Palestine*, which happened soon after.

You have *Debora*'s oracle of the victory promised to *Barak*.

You have *Samuel*'s oracle of the advancement and rejection of *Saul*.

You have an oracle of the same *Samuel*, of the advancement of *David*.

You have *Nathan*'s oracle concerning *Absalom*'s revolt.

You have *Ahijah*'s oracle concerning the advancement of *Jeroboam*, and the division of *Solomon*'s kingdom into ten tribes, and into two tribes, whereof the lesser part was to continue in the possession of *Solomon*'s heirs.

You have *Ahijah*'s prediction of the death of *Jeroboam*'s son.

You have a prediction of the advancement of *Jehu* in the place of *Jehoram* king of *Israel*.

You have *Elijah*'s prediction of the exemplary punishment of *Ahab* and *Jezabel*.

You have the prediction of *Jehoiakim*'s death made by *Jeremiah*, *Chap.* XXII. 18, 19. and *Chap.* XXXVI. 30. which happened ten years after.

You have the prediction of *Jechoniah*'s miseries made by *Jeremiah*, *Chap.* XXII. 3.

You have *Jeremiah*'s prediction of the death of the false Prophet *Ananiah*, but seven months before it happened.

You have an express designation of *Zorobabel* to conclude the re-building of the temple, made by *Zechariah*, *Chap.* IV. 9. and which was compleated in four years.

It is therefore fully evident, that the prediction of particular facts, which were to happen in a very short time, served to establish the authority of the Prophets. And in effect one see's that they proceeded

upon

upon the authority which thoſe predictions of nearer events gave them, to foretell other particular events at a greater diſtance.

So you ſee that *Moſes* foretold after a ſort, after *Jacob*, the manner how the land of *Canaan* was to be divided, tho' the thing was to be done by lot.

You ſee the ſame *Moſes* foretelling the ſeveral captivities which the people of *Iſrael* ſuffered after the conqueſt, and the method of God's raiſing up ſeveral judges, to the number of fourteen, to bring them out of thoſe calamities.

You ſee the ſame *Moſes* foretelling that the temple ſhould be built in the tribe of *Benjamin*, tho' it was the leaſt.

You have *Joſhua*'s prediction of the way how the re-builder of *Jericho* ſhould be exemplarily puniſhed, which was accompliſhed in *Ahab*'s time, (I *Kings* XVI. 34.) about 570 years after this prophetical imprecation of *Joſhua*.

You have the prediction of a Prophet, who was contemporary to *Jeroboam*, about the birth of *Joſiah*, which was not till 350 years after, (I *Kings* XIII.) and of the manner of his deſtroying the altar which *Jeroboam* built.

One ſee's a prediction of the overthrow of the kingdom of *Samaria*, within 65 years by *Iſaiah*, in the reign of *Jotham*.

One ſee's the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, foretold by ſeveral of the Prophets.

One ſee's the taking of *Tyre* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, foretold by *Iſaiah*, *Chap.* XXIII. 15, 17.

One ſee's the promiſe of its re-eſtabliſhment, ſeventy years after its deſtruction.

One ſee's the promiſe of *Cyrus*'s birth made by *Iſaiah*, *Chap.* XLIV. 45. as of one that ſhould reſtore liberty to the *Jews*, and give them opportunities of re-building their temple at *Jeruſalem*.

One ſee's the prediction of the manner how *Antiochus Epiphanes* would treat the *Jews* in his life time, and how he ſhould be puniſhed for his cruelties and ſacrileges.

One ſee's the prediction of the courage of the *Maccabees*, who ſhould oppoſe the tyranny of that prince, and puriſie anew the Divine worſhip.

So that it is plain, that the foretelling of theſe particular facts, which were at ſo great a diſtance, revived the memory of theſe Prophets amongſt the *Jews* in every age, and made them read them with a ſingular attention.

One ought alſo to make the ſame reflexion upon thoſe oracles which have reſpect to the particular events of the ſtate of the *Jews*, and its continuance until the time of the Meſſiah, after which the Prophets foretel its ruin and deſtruction without remedy.

In ſhort, one may ſay, that there was no revolution never ſo little conſiderable, of which we do not find very many, and very particular predictions, foretold by ſeveral Prophets upon very different occaſions, and particular circumſtances.

One ſee's in the books of *Moſes* exact deſcriptions of the pilgrimages of *Abraham*'s poſterity, of their continuance in *Egypt*, of the oppreſſion they were there to undergo, of their prodigious increaſe, of their rob-

bing the *Egyptians* at their departure, of their methods in conquering the land of *Canaan*, of the way how kings ſhould ariſe from *Abraham*; which was accompliſhed in the *Iſhmaelites* and *Edomites*, and at laſt in the *Iſraelites*.

One ſee's expreſs predictions of the ſeveral judges whom God ſhould raiſe up to the people of *Iſrael*.

One ſee's an expreſs prediction of the advancement of the tribe of *Juda* to the kingdom.

One ſee's a prediction of the future ſubjection of the *Edomites* to the power of the kings of *Juda*, and of their conquering of the countries which lye along the banks of *Euphrates*, which was fulfilled in *David*'s time.

One ſee's an expreſs diviſion of that kingdom into two very unequal parts.

One ſee's great numbers of predictions concerning the ſtate of the kings of *Juda* and *Iſrael*: for inſtance, you have an oracle concerning the deſtruction of *Jehu*'s family in the fourth generation (*d*).

The deſtruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes is expreſly foretold, and the term is very exactly ſet down.

The ruin of *Jeruſalem*, and of its kings, is alſo expreſly foretold.

The time of the captivity of the *Jews* in *Babylon*, and

Their re-eſtabliſhment by *Cyrus* after ſeventy years are alſo very diſtinctly foretold.

The deſolation of *Judea* under the empire of *Alexander*'s ſucceſſors, is foretold very exactly.

Their re-eſtabliſhment after theſe deſolations, and the way by which they were to be defended by the *Maccabees*, who ſhould become their kings is likewiſe foretold.

In ſhort, one ſee's expreſs predictions of the ruin of *Jeruſalem*, and of the whole nation under the *Roman* empire, after the coming of the Meſſiah.

As the people of *Iſrael* had always great quarrels with the neighbouring nations; ſo one finds that amongſt the oracles which particularly regard the ſtate of the *Jews*, the Prophets have interwoven a great number, which concern thoſe ſtrange people, with relation to thoſe differences which were kept up between the people of *Iſrael*, and them.

So one ſee's the *Egyptians* and the *Canaanites* puniſhed, in the execution of the oracles pronounced againſt the deſcendants of *Cham*.

One ſee's the prediction of the ruin of *Benhadad* king of *Syria*, and of his houſe, foretold to the tenth generation.

One ſee's the prediction of the ruin of *Egypt* and *Tyre*, which happened under *Nebuchadnezzar*.

One ſee's the prediction of the ruin of the *Moabites*, which was under the ſame *Nebuchadnezzar*, after that kingdom had ſubſiſted almoſt fourteen ages from its firſt foundation.

One ſee's frequent oracles concerning the ruin of *Nineveh*, and its empire.

One ſee's oracles concerning the ruin of *Babylon*, which happened under *Cyrus*.

One

(*d*) II Kings x. 30.

One ſee's oracles of the deſtruction of the *Perſian* empire by *Alexander*.

One ſee's oracles concerning the manner of this princes conquering the greateſt part of the world, and of his leaving his empire divided into four kingdoms.

One ſee's frequent oracles concerning the ſtate of the empire of the *Seleucidæ*, and the *Ptolemees*, who had particular quarrels with the Jewiſh commonwealth.

One ſee's the alliances which were to be between the two kingdoms foretold, and the ſmall ſucceſs which ſhould ariſe thence in terminating their differences.

One ſee's predictions of the treatment which the *Jews* ſhould meet with in thoſe kingdoms.

One ſee's a prediction of the retreat which *Egypt* was to give to the *Jews*, and of the temple they were to build there.

One ſee's an exact prediction of the manner of the prophanation of the temple by *Antiochus Epiphanes* for three years together.

One ſee's the prediction of the ruin of theſe two governments by the arms of the *Roman* empire.

It is very natural to make ſome reflexions upon ſuch a various multitude of oracles.

I. That there are no books in the world which are formed like thoſe which we find in the hands of the *Jews*.

One finds there a hiſtory exactly purſued, and in a natural dependance, from the beginning of the world, for 3500 years.

One finds there a ſeries of oracles which foretel all ſorts of events, ſo inſeparably united with the hiſtory, that it is impoſſible to find by what means the prophecies could have been ſo brought to ſupport the hiſtory, and the hiſtory to ſupport the authority of the prophecies.

One finds oracles ſo clear, and ſo particular, eſpecially in the book of *Daniel*, that *Porphyry* a mortal enemy to the Chriſtians, was forc'd to aſſert that the book of *Daniel* was forged after *Antiochus Epiphanes*'s time; a ridiculous imagination! For this prophecy was tranſlated into *Greek* more than one hundred years before, and was in the hands, not only of the *Jews*, but of the *Egyptians* alſo, mortal enemies to the whole Jewiſh nation.

This alſo is very ſurprizing, that ſince the *Jews*, after their diſperſion, preſerve theſe hiſtories wherever they are, as the accompliſhments of the oracles, and theſe oracles as predictions of thoſe events of which their hiſtory is very full, they ſhould never think of propoſing to us any books of a like nature, conſidering that now for one and twenty ages they have had no paralel authors, who have both writ hiſtory, and pronounced oracles.

II. But, as theſe reflexions lead us on to others, ſo we ought to enter upon them by conſidering what the moſt unreaſonable obſtinacy can oppoſe to the authority of the Hiſtorical and Prophetical Books of Scripture.

CHAP. IV.

CHAP. IV.

That how common soever Oracles may have been amongst the Pagans, yet nothing amongst them can justly be compared with those which are found amongst the Jews.

ONE of the greatest objections which can in all probability be made against this surprizing series of Oracles, which are found in the books of the Old Testament, is taken from that great number of Oracles which are found amongst the Pagans. This objection deserves to be considered, because it will more clearly domonstrate the authority of the Prophetical books, which are in the hands of the *Jews*.

I confess there have been false prophets: and indeed, since God has given us marks to distinguish them from true ones, which may be seen in the books of *Moses*, it cannot be denied but there have been some false prophets. And that moreover, the history of the Prophets discovering to us impostors frequently, we may freely acknowledge, that amongst the Pagans, and the people bordering upon *Judea*, there have been men who have boasted of predictions of things to come, as well as amongst the *Jews*.

I confess also, that some Heathen writers speak of certain oracles, which in all appearance are very well circumstantiated, and of which they relate a very exact accomplishment.

But several things ought to be observed upon this argument, which deserve an attentive consideration.

I. We see that their most celebrated things have been only an imitation of what was done amongst the *Jews*. The *Egyptians* imitated the *Urim* and the *Thummim* of the Jewish high priest. And they appropriated to him the right of giving oracles: and so we see they are given by a voice from heaven, which the *Jews* saw was granted to their Prophets. We may see it in the history of *Socrates*'s life, and in *Apuleius*, p. 339.

II. We see that the same Pagan historians take notice that very many, even the greatest part of their oracles, were very ambiguous, and false. The philosophers, and *Tully* particularly, openly laugh'd at them (*Lib.* I. II. *de Divinatione.*) They thought it a ridiculous thing that *Apollo Delphicus*, the god of poetry, should give his answers in very bad verse, and at last be reduced to prose. *Eusebius* quotes a discourse of *Oenomaus* a *Greek* philosopher, who wrote against oracles, to decry them as impostures.

III. We see, that those oracles which had acquired the greatest reputation by their accomplishment, were borrowed from the Prophets of the synagogues. We have an illustrious example in the birth of *Cyrus*, which the Prophet *Isaiah* had foretold, about the year of the world 3292. and concerning which they pretend to shew prophecies of *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Croesus*, about the year 3492 (*e*), which shows that if the thing was

(*e*) *Abydenus. Herodot.* lib. i. cap. 55. & 91.

was really known to them, they could not have known it but by the prophetical writings which were amongſt the *Jews*, and which could not have been concealed from them, becauſe the *Jews* read them with care, to comfort themſelves under that captivity to which they were reduced by *Nebuchadnezzar*.

IV. It is in effect proved by examining their oracles, moſt of which were either falſe or forged. This *Euſebius* has clearly proved, [*de Præpar. Evangelicâ, Lib.* IX. *cap.* 5.] The proverb of the *Sibyll*'s or *Delphick* prieſteſs's, favouring of *Philip*, is commonly known. It was eaſie for theſe Heathen princes to biaſs their people with ſuch predictions. But what *Euſebius* ſays (*f*), puts the thing beyond all queſtion, for he expreſly ſhews, that when the prieſts were put to the rack, they confeſſed the whole contrivance of thoſe oracles, which they pronounced to abuſe the credulity of the people.

V. We ought to obſerve, that we cannot find great numbers of oracles upon the ſame ſubject, whereas one ſee's that the Prophets follow'd (as it were) *Moſes*'s model of the ſtate of the commonwealth of the *Jews*, and that they frequently concur in foretelling the ſame facts from one generation to another.

VI. We ought to remember that theſe oracles were not kept within the limits of one ſingle ſtate or nation.

VII. It may be ſaid that they were not publickly known, having been only propoſed in private places, before a very few, and in ſhort, that they were not actually known to the moſt part of the neighbouring people; whereas one ſee's that the Jewiſh Prophets gave their oracles in the moſt ſolemn aſſemblies, and when they were committed to writing, they were known to all thoſe who had any commerce with that nation. So that *Iſaiah*'s prophecies were queſtionleſs known to *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Cyrus*, who look'd upon himſelf as deſigned by God to reſtore their liberty to the *Jews*. We may make the ſame judgment of the book of *Daniel*, which was known to *Alexander* without all queſtion, as one may collect from the favourable reception the *Jews* found from him.

VIII. We ought to obſerve, that theſe pretended oracles were given, for the moſt part, in favour of thoſe princes, who could ſatisfie the greedineſs of the prieſts. Whereas the Prophets among the *Jews* lived in the moſt diſ-intereſted manner in the world, and uſually pronounced nothing but reproaches and menaces of cruel calamities to thoſe princes who had the government in their hands. Their miniſtry conſiſted in a couragious oppoſition to the corruptions in their laws, and their religion, and in cenſuring their princes and governours with a ſingular intrepidity; and indeed, we ſee that moſt of them met with the puniſhment of their boldneſs, and made trial of the moſt cruel tortures.

IX. Laſt of all, we ought to take notice, that as the oracles which are mentioned in Heathen authors, were only of facts of ſmall importance to thoſe people, amongſt whom it is ſaid that they were pronounced, ſo we do not find that they thought themſelves much concerned in their preſervation; whereas one ſee's that the Jewiſh nation were ſo perſwaded of the truth of theſe oracles, with which they were entruſted, that nothing to this very day could ever oblige them to diſcontinue the reading

(*f*) Lib. iv. *de Præparat. Evangel.* Lib. iv. initio.

ng of them, whatever diſputes they may otherwiſe have with the Chriſtians, who make uſe of them to eſtabliſh their pretentions, notwithſtanding *all the claims* of the ſynagogue.

When this is laid down, it would ſeem as if I might reaſonably conclude, that the wonderful variety of oracles which are to be found amongſt the *Jews*, cannot be at all weakned by thoſe oracles of which we find ſo frequent mention in Pagan writers.

But we ought to go further, in explaining two things, which will perfectly clear this matter; one is, that the Hiſtorical and Prophetical Books of the Old Teſtament, after *Moſes*, can be no forgeries; the other is, that in truth, thoſe Oracles which we find inſerted in thoſe books, could not poſſibly have been forged after their completion.

CHAP. V.

That the Books, in which we may find theſe Oracles, were never forged.

I HAVE obſerved formerly, that it is abſolutely neceſſary that the authority of thoſe Books, in which theſe Oracles are inſerted, be eſtabliſhed, before we can build upon the authority of the Oracles. And indeed, if we cannot clearly ſhew that theſe Books were written, and publickly known, before the things happened, which are ſaid to be accompliſhments of thoſe preceding Oracles, it would be natural to call in queſtion the authority of theſe Oracles. But it is very eaſie to ſatisfie an equitable reader herein, and to eſtabliſh in general, or ſeverally, the exiſtence of theſe prophetical writings, before the times in which thoſe facts happened which we propoſe as the accompliſhment of thoſe prophecies.

I ſhall make uſe of two ſorts of reflexions to eſtabliſh my propoſition. The firſt conſiſts in general conſiderations upon the books themſelves: the ſecond has reſpect to particular facts, which are unconteſted, and whence the ſame truth very naturally reſults.

I. We ought to obſerve, that whereas in *Geneſis Moſes* makes uſe of no other *epocha* to fix the time of any event, but the years of the life of ſome famous Patriarch: as for inſtance, he fixes the flood to the 600 year of *Noah*'s age; in *Exodus* and *Numbers* (g) he uſes the time of their coming out of *Egypt* for his *epocha*; in the books of the following authors, the years from their departure out of *Egypt* were carefully ſet down 'till the fourth year of king *Solomon*'s reign, which was 480 years after their departure. This was a character to fix the time of all thoſe who lived after that *epocha*.

II. The building of the temple began a new *epocha* amongſt the *Jews*, as appears from II *Chron.* VIII. 1. tho' they began after that time to reckon by the years of the kings of *Juda* and *Iſrael*, as appears by the books

(g) Exod. xix. Numb. xxxiii. 38.

books of the firſt Prophets. Which is a character ſufficiently certain, to diſtinguiſh thoſe who liv'd after *Solomon*, with the time when they liv'd.

III. It's plain, that the *Babyloniſh* captivity, and afterwards their ſubjection to the *Perſian* empire, obliged them to fix their events, and to date their prophecies, by the years of the governments of thoſe foreign kings. [See *Daniel*, *Ezechiel*, *Zechariah*, and *Haggai*.] So the author of the book of *Maccabees* refers to the years of the *Seleucidæ*. Now, that we may the better perceive the force of this obſervation, we muſt remember three things. 1. That the authors who lived after the carrying away of the *Jews* into *Babylon*, make uſe of ſome *Chaldee* terms, which are not to be found in the foregoing Prophets. For we may ſee in the books of *Haggai*, *Zechariah*, and *Malachi*, the ſame ſtyle with *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, and *Daniel* (*h*). 2. The authors of theſe books, give names to the months, which they had not before the captivity. The *Jews* only called their months, firſt, and ſecond, &c. and ſo they gave names which were unheard of before (*i*). 3. The authors of theſe prophecies take particular notice of any newly inſtituted faſts; thus we ſee that the Prophet *Haggai* mentioned thoſe faſts of which we have nothing in the law, but which were inſtituted during the captivity.

We muſt blind ourſelves of purpoſe, to conceive that any impoſtor could forge books, which have ſo exact a relation, and ſuch certain characteriſticks to fix them to the time in which every author lived, and to the circumſtances wherein he wrote. We muſt of neceſſity grant, that before ſuch an impoſtor could bring about ſuch a deſign, he muſt have made himſelf maſter of the whole prophane hiſtory, to fix ſo exactly the hiſtory of the Jewiſh nation, and of thoſe oracles which have been given in circumſtances which are unintelligible without the help of prophane hiſtories of different nations.

I come now to facts which cannot be conteſted. It is ſufficient that thoſe facts be acknowledged as true, to eſtabliſh in general the truth of thoſe books whereof we teach.

I. It cannot be denied, that the *Jews* preſerve theſe oracles to this day, with great fidelity.

II. It cannot be denied, that they are in the hands of Chriſtians, who preſerve them as well as the *Jews*, ſince they have been ſeparated from them; that is, for almoſt ſeventeen ages.

III. It cannot be denied, that theſe prophecies have been exactly read by the *Jews*, becauſe of thoſe oracles upon which they believe, to this day, that the whole happineſs of their nation is founded.

IV. It cannot be denied, that the *Jews* have read theſe Books exactly to refute the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, who have pretended from the firſt age of their appearing, that Jeſus Chriſt is the Meſſiah mark'd out by theſe oracles. In ſhort, whereas the Chriſtians pretend to prove by the accompliſhment of the ancient oracles, that Jeſus Chriſt was the Meſſiah: It is known, that the *Jews* endeavour to this day to wreſt the ſenſe of theſe oracles, and to ſhew that there are many things which are not literally

(*h*) Ezech. xl. 1. Daniel x. Zach. i. Hagg. i.

(*i*) *Talm. Roſch. Haſſanah*, c. 1.

rally accompliſhed, and which by conſequence cannot be apply'd to Jeſus Chriſt.

V. It cannot be deny'd, that moſt of the controverſies of the *Jews* with the Chriſtians, only regard the application of the text of the prophetical authors. The Chriſtians explain them in a myſtical ſenſe, the *Jews* maintain that they ought to be explained literally.

VI. It cannot be deny'd that about 300 years before the birth of our Saviour, the prophetical books were tranſlated, and put into the hands of the *Egyptians*, having been carried to, and tranſlated at *Alexandria*, by a publick order of the whole nation, for the ſatisfaction of a King of *Egypt*. The hiſtory of that verſion which put thoſe ſacred books into the hands of the *Greeks*, and the *Jews* who dwelt in *Egypt*, is the moſt famous thing in the world, and which made thoſe books perfectly known.

Here we have now theſe books in *Hebrew*, and in *Greek*, that is to ſay, in the primitive language of the *Jews*, and the vulgar language of the empire which *Alexander* founded.

It is known, that from that time the Chriſtians took care to make great numbers of tranſlations into all the vulgar tongues, after the preaching of the goſpel; and that they preſerved thoſe ancient books as the firſt elements of their religion.

Now it will be ſufficient to acknowledge thoſe truths, to conſider;

That thoſe oracles were true which foretold things which happened almoſt four ages after their prediction. Thus, for inſtance, the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; the overthrow of the Jewiſh ſtate; the calling of the *Gentiles* to the ſervice of the God of *Iſrael*; the deſtruction of the *Syrian* and *Egyptian* monarchies; are all contained in the books of *Daniel*, *Haggai*, *Zachariah*, and *Malachi*.

Now there is not more difficulty to conceive, that ſuch authors as *Iſaiah*, *Amos*, *Joel*, ſhould have foretold the ſame thing eight or nine hundred years before, than there is to believe that they were foretold by thoſe who liv'd but little above four ages before they actually came to paſs. There is therefore no difficulty in conceiving that theſe antient oracles were propoſed as we ſee them, and in thoſe times to which we find them fixed.

But we ought to go further into this matter, and to eſtabliſh the ſame thing by the conſideration of the things themſelves.

I confeſs that we might have a ſuſpicion of thoſe oracles which are not related upon the faith of a publick volume. As for inſtance, thoſe of *Elijah*, *Eliſha*, and *Uriah* the ſon of *Shemaiah*, who ſeem never to have publiſhed any thing.

But here we are to obſerve, 1. That uſually the authors who publiſh the oracles, are not the ſame with thoſe who tell us of their accompliſhment. 2. That the oracles of which we now ſpeak, were upon ſubjects perfectly known, and upon very illuſtrious exigencies. What more illuſtrious than the deſtruction of *Ahab*'s family, foretold by *Elijah*? What more extraordinary than the manner of *Jezebel*'s death, foretold by the ſame prophet?

In ſhort, we ought to take notice, I. That theſe oracles were written for the moſt part in compleat volumes: We have ſixteen prophets ſufficiently diſtinguiſh'd by their proper volumes.

II. Each

II. Each of theſe authors has a very different character from the reſt; ſo that ſome, as *Daniel* for inſtance, write in a peculiar language one part of his book being in *Chaldee*.

III. Every one has ſome relation to the reſt: So thoſe who liv'd together, often treat of the ſame things: So *Iſaiah*, for inſtance, *Joel*, *Amos*, *Hoſea*. But they had ſeparate idea's, and particular oracles, and a turn which perfectly diſtinguiſhes them one from another.

IV. One needs only read their works to find that they wrote in different places. *Amos* was of *Juda*, and went to prophecy in *Iſrael*, that appears plainly. *Ezechiel* and *Daniel* propheſied in *Chaldea*; that's ſeen by reading their works.

V. There is a natural dependance between the books of *Moſes*, and thoſe of the prophets in general; For the prophets were continually reproaching the kings and people with the crimes which they committed againſt the law of God propoſed by *Moſes*.

VI. There is a natural dependance between the writings of the former, and of the latter prophets. So *Jeremiah* is quoted by *Daniel* (*k*), as foretelling the time when the deſolations of *Jeruſalem* were to have an end; this he propoſes, not as if he had learnt it by a revelation, but as a thing which he had found out by an attentive examination of the prophecy of *Jeremiah*.

VII. There is an exact connection of theſe oracles with the hiſtory of the time, which is often interwoven with the prophecies. One ſee's it in the books of *Iſaiah*, *Jeremiah*, and *Daniel*; the other hiſtorical books not being altogether ſo particular, as theſe prophetical books are.

VIII. In ſhort, one ſee's that theſe books are interwoven with oracles concerning ancient events, and people which have now no exiſtence, ſo that hinders us from ſuſpecting any forgery.

I ſhall not repeat here the common arguments which eſtabliſh the credit of theſe books, I brought in moſt of them when I eſtabliſhed the authority of the books of *Moſes*. I ſhall only make ſome reflexions here, to eſtabliſh the ſame truth.

CHAP. VI.

That the manner of writing the prophetical books of the Old Teſtament, ſhews that thoſe oracles could not have been forged after their completion.

I Have ſeveral things to take notice of, to make this truth more ſenſible. The firſt is taken from the neceſſary connexion of all the parts of the hiſtory of the Old Teſtament, the truth of which I have proved by ſeveral characters. This hiſtory is exactly written by ſeveral authors: now the hiſtory of the prophets, and of their oracles,

(*k*) Dan. ix. 2.

oracles, is so exactly *framed* into the history, that it is impossible to take it out, without confounding the whole.

The books of *Samuel*, which were written by *Samuel*, by *Nathan* and by *Gad*, as appears by I *Chron.* XXIX. 29. contain the history from the year of the world 2888. to the year 2987.

The books of the *Kings* contain the history of the kings, and of the prophets, from the year 2989. to the year 3442.

The books of the *Chronicles* recapitulate the history, from the beginning of the world, to the year 3468.

Ezra writ his history from the year 3468. to the year 3538.

Nehemiah continued it from 3550. to 3563.

Here is therefore on the one side an uninterrupted series of history; and on the other side a continued succession of prophecies.

David, who began to reign in the year 2950. with several other prophets of that time, writ the most part of the *Psalms*, which are full of oracles, and which were sung by the people, as a part of the divine service.

Isaiah began his prophecy in 3246. and dy'd in the year 3306. *Hosea*, *Micah*, and *Nahum* were contemporary with him.

Jeremiah begun his prophecy in the year 3375. and liv'd at the same time with *Zephaniah*.

Daniel was carry'd into *Babylon* in 3401. and prophesied until 3470.

Ezechiel prophecy'd at *Babylon* in 3509.

Haggai and *Zechariah* prophecy'd in 3590. soon after *Ezra*, in the time of *Nehemiah*.

Malachy seems to have lived until the year 3589.

Can we therefore in the least imagine that a history should be so intermixed with prophesies and oracles, without conceiving at the same time the truth of both by an invincible necessity?

But we may make a second reflexion hereupon.

There are three general characters which distinguish prophets very sensibly from the generality of authors.

I. They were publick censors; Let us but read the history of *Isaiah*'s conduct, who called all the heads of the people, rulers of *Sodom*; or that of *Jeremiah*, *Chap.* XXXVI. or of any other of the prophets in general.

II. They were comforters of the people, when they had brought them to repentance by their preaching. There are as many instances of this, as there are prophets.

III. They foretold remarkable occurrences, happy or unfortunate, long before there was any probability that they should happen.

It is impossible to consider these characters, without seeing, that the state of affairs was that which gave a foundation for their sermons: So that one must of necessity have framed their history of new, to give ground for a forgery. This change in the style of the prophets, follows the circumstances of the Jewish state exactly. All that *Isaiah* or *Jeremiah* say, will hold no longer than whilst you suppose the state of the *Jews* to be as corrupt as the history of that time represents it. But if you suppose it to be as the history do's distinctly explain it, nothing can be imagined more forcible than their sermons. For as they joined oracles with

with promiſes in their *thundering* ſermons, ſo one ſee's that they cannot be parted.

One may make another reflexion upon this matter, by ſhewing that theſe oracles, and theſe books were ſo famous amongſt the *Jews*, that no forgery can be ſuppoſed.

The times in which they were writ, are a great proof, for they appeared upon very remarkable occaſions.

One may rank the prophets into four orders, according to the ſeveral times in which they appeared: *David*, and the prophets of his time; Thoſe who lived before the *Babyloniſh* captivity; as *Jonah*, *Hoſea*, *Joel*, *Amos*, *Obadiah*, *Iſaiah*, *Micah*, *Nahum*, *Habakkuk*, *Zephaniah*, *Jeremiah*.

Thoſe who propheſied during the captivity; *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, and *Daniel*.

Thoſe who lived after their return from *Babylon*; *Haggai*, *Zechariah*, and *Malachy*.

Now we have an equal aſſurance of all theſe prophets, that they were famous.

Who can deny the oracles of *David* to have been famous, when they were preſerv'd amongſt their publick hymns?

One ſee's that *Micah*'s prediction ſav'd *Jeremiah* whom they would have condemned for prophecying the ruin of the temple under *Jehoiakim*, when *Micah* had propheſied the ſame thing under *Hezekiah*, that is to ſay, about one hundred and twenty years before this prediction of *Jeremiah*: Here's an event which aſſures us without affectation, That this prophecy was very well known: were not therefore the other prophecies which were in the hands of the *Jews* very well known by the whole nation?

The other prophets lived in very remarkable times: *Iſaiah* under *Jotham*, *Ahaz*, and *Manaſſeh* impious princes: the laſt of which put him to a cruel death, for the freedom of his cenſures and predictions.

There was in the time of every prophet, a great number of circumſtances which may be enlarged upon, and which will further prove, That their works muſt of neceſſity have been very publick, and very famous amongſt the *Jews*.

We muſt not here neglect what do's more particularly regard the perſons of the prophets.

I. Some of them were prieſts, that is to ſay publick miniſters of their religion. *Jeremiah* and *Ezechiel* were of that number: This may be obſerved in reading of their works, and in obſerving the nature of their revelations, which were for the moſt part accommodated by God to thoſe idea's about which the prophets were moſt employ'd.

II. Some were very illuſtrious by their birth: Thus *David*, for inſtance, was king of *Iſrael*, *Iſaiah* was a prince of the blood, and *Daniel* was one of the princes of *Judah*; which may be eaſily found out by conſidering the majeſty of their ſtyle, and greatneſs of their expreſſions.

III. Some were very contemptible by their employment, and by their birth: So *Amos*, for inſtance, and thoſe other prophets whoſe father is

barely named, without joining to it any honourable title, if the *Jews* obſervation has any ſtrength.

Now, it is well known, that tho' the gift of prophecy made him who had it ſufficiently famous, yet the character of the perſon often made the prophecy famous. Sometimes indeed the meanneſs of the perſon, as in *Amos*, made the work to be more regarded, every body taking occaſion from the ancient profeſſion of the prophet, to conſider the prophecies which he publiſhed with more attention.

One ought to obſerve, with care, That thoſe prophets whoſe writings are preſerv'd, as well as thoſe who did not write, were continually ſtruck at by falſe prophets, who oppoſed them with great heat. Since then we have no prophecies preſerved, but of thoſe whoſe predictions were accompliſhed, the event juſtifying the truth of their predictions, with regard to particular facts near the time which they had foretold to eſtabliſh their authority, whereas the predictions of others, wanting this character, were neglected, and at laſt abſolutely loſt: It appears plainly, That thoſe which remain were things of the greateſt reputation among the *Jews*.

Beſides, I may add, That one needs only read their books to ſee that they not only foretold obſcure things, or what particularly concerned their ſtate; but alſo things of a more ſplendid nature, the overthrow of kingdoms, of cities, the deſtruction of whole nations, the deſtruction of their own city, with its re-eſtabliſhment; Matters which would render their books very illuſtrious, and which would cauſe them to be read, not only by the *Jews*, but alſo by the neighbour nations, the *Ammonites*, *Moabites*, *Aſſyrians*, *Perſians*, *Egyptians*, &c.

Is not this therefore a very particular thing, and that which made the prophets very illuſtrious, That the great luſtre of the prophets continued but for a certain time: There have been none ſince the year 3553. their glory appeared in the hiſtory of eight ages, but it do's not extend it ſelf any farther: Now why, I pray, ſhould there be no impoſtors after *Malachy*, as well as there were impoſtors before him?

One may imagine perhaps, That the prophecies were immediately diſperſt, ſome being uttered in one place, and ſome in another: Some in the kingdom of *Judah*, and others in the kingdom of *Iſrael*: Some in *Babylon*, others in *Egypt*, which might give opportunities for impoſtors. But,

I. This objection may be ſtrongly retorted back: For how can we conceive, that in the diviſion, which ſeparated the *Iſraelites* from the *Jews*, thoſe of *Judah* would charge themſelves with the writings publiſhed in a kingdom ſo much an enemy to them, without examination, when every thing which comes from thence, ought to appear ſuſpected.

II. They were all collected into particular volumes: But the prophecies of *Hoſea*, *Iſaiah*, and *Jeremy*, and the moſt conſiderable of the reſt, are preſerved in books which contain many other things.

III. They are all exactly joyned with the hiſtory of the ſame nation, each one in a place where there was an equal concern to preſerve, and to gather them together. But beſides, they were all collected into one body. In ſhort, the LXXII. Interpreters tranſlated them into *Greek* in the

the year of the world 3727. and ſo ſubmitted them to the examination of the *Egyptians*; and this alſo keeps us from doubting of their truth.

This tranſlation was made but one hundred thirty and eight years after *Malachy* the laſt of the prophets.

But what judgment ſoever may be made of theſe reflexions, the deſign whereof is only to eſtabliſh the reputation of theſe prophecies, and of the books wherein they are written, that ſo no room may be left for any ſuſpicions of forgery: I ſhall add two conſiderations to what I have ſaid already, which ought to appear convincing to every attentive man.

I. One can ſuſpect none but the *Jews* as forgers of theſe oracles: Now, not to ſay any thing of the abſurdity of ſuppoſing that a whole nation ſhould have ſubſcribed to ſuch an impoſture; all the *Jews* throughout the world, were after their return from the captivity, ſtrongly poſſeſſed with an opinion of the Meſſiah's being a great temporal king: and they have the ſame belief to this very hour, in all places of the world, wherever they are diſperſt.

This being once laid down, I affirm it to be impoſſible that the *Jews* ſhould forge oracles which aſſert expreſsly, That the Meſſiah ſhould be put to death in ſo very odious a manner. For, as I ſhall afterwards ſhew, the oldeſt doctors attributed to the Meſſiah; all thoſe oracles which ſpeak of the death of the Meſſiah according to the Chriſtians, and which they themſelves in proceſs of time were forced to interpret of two Meſſiah's, one expoſed to a world of miſeries, and the other only glorious: Or at leaſt, I may ſay it is impoſſible that the *Jews* ſhould conſent to a forgery which thwarted their common Idea's and pretenſions in ſo very ſenſible a manner.

II. The ſecond conſideration eſtabliſhes the ſame truth with no leſs firmneſs, which is that the Call of the Gentiles to have a ſhare in the bleſſings of the covenant which God made with the people of *Iſrael*, was the thing in the world from which the *Jews* had the greateſt averſion; they looked upon the bleſſings which the Meſſiah was to communicate, as advantages entirely reſerved for thoſe of their own nation. How then can we conceive that the *Jews* ſhould forge ſo many oracles which ſhould thwart their prejudices ſo ſenſibly? or how can we imagine that a whole people would authorize with their approbation an impoſture ſo contrary, and ſo very oppoſite to their own Opinions?

But it is no hard thing to imagine, That when the *Jews* were once perſwaded of the authority of their prophets, either by their miracles, or by the ready accompliſhment of every oracle which they had *publickly* pronounced, that they ſhould receive their books, with a profound ſubmiſſion, and preſerve them with the utmoſt care. But it appears to be an incomprehenſible thing, for a people to receive impoſtures contrary to their prejudices, and impoſtures reiterated ſo often, without any ground, but what a vaſt number of records never before heard of would produce.

But I ſuppoſe theſe reflexions will ſuffice to eſtabliſh the truth of the hiſtorical and prophetical books of the Old Teſtament: So that there

will be no need of alledging particular proofs, which might demonſtrate the truth of each book in particular, which would carry me out to too great a length.

I ſhall now conſider the oracles themſelves, and I ſhall ſhew the progreſs of the light of this revelation, with reſpect to the promiſe of the Meſſiah. That this progreſs may be the better obſerved, I ſhall do three things, as I have formerly obſerved, without which the mind of a wiſe reader will not receive ſatisfaction.

I. I ſhall explain in a few words the reaſon why theſe oracles are interwoven with ſeveral hiſtories, or prophecies which ſeem to have no relation to the promiſe of the Meſſiah.

II. I ſhall give ſuch rules as will ſerve to juſtifie the application which both *Jews* and *Chriſtians* have equally made of ſeveral oracles only to the Meſſiah.

III. I ſhall ſet the oracles according to the order of time, which will manifeſt the advancement and progreſs of that light which is to be found in the revelation it ſelf: As indeed, it is natural to conceive that God ſhould explain himſelf more clearly, in this matter, in proportion as the things themſelves were nearer to their completion.

CHAP. VII.

For what Reaſon the Oracles, which relate to the Meſſiah, were interwoven with other things, which ſeem to be very widely diſtant.

ONE of the greateſt difficulties which may be raiſed againſt the oracles of the Old Teſtament which concern the Meſſiah, is that ſurprizing mixture which one ſee's of thoſe oracles, and of other ſubjects which ſeem to be widely diſtant from any idea of the Meſſiah.

There are none ſo prophane, as to deny, that if in the ſame author, and in the ſame chapter, any man ſhould read in one continued ſeries predictions which ſhould explain the miraculous birth of the Meſſiah, his family, his preaching, his miracles, his ſufferings, his reſurrection, his aſcenſion into Heaven, the ſending of the Holy Ghoſt, the calling of the *Gentiles*; but that the hiſtory of the goſpel would ſufficiently juſtifie Jeſus Chriſt to be the promiſed Meſſiah.

But they take it to be a very ſtrange thing, that the apoſtles ſhould apply ſeveral paſſages in ancient authors to the hiſtory of Jeſus Chriſt, tho' the whole contexture of their books do not ſeem to oblige us to make any ſuch interpretations.

They therefore ſuppoſe that the apoſtles made ſeveral fortunate alluſions to the more remarkable paſſages in thoſe ancient authors, which may paſs for predictions of thoſe events, which afterwards happened; juſt as *Nonnus* wrote the hiſtory of the goſpel in *Homer*'s verſes, and as *Eudocia*

made a *Cento* out of *Virgil*'s poem, which contained the ſame hiſtory, tho' neither *Homer* nor *Virgil* had any of the myſteries of the Chriſtian religion then in view.

That this apparent difficulty may be ſolved, it will be neceſſary to examine three things: I. The matter of fact it ſelf. II. The reaſons which gave occaſion for the doing of it. III. The impreſſion which this fact has produced in the minds of men to this very time.

For the firſt; Tho' it is well known that common uſe do's not allow men to joyn foreign idea's in the ſame diſcourſe, yet we may eaſily conceive that God might and ought to do it, if we will allow what may be eaſily collected, that he reſolved to ſend the Meſſiah into the world. Such a practice was the more natural, becauſe the antient Patriarchs before *Moſes*, and *Moſes* himſelf, who form'd the commonwealth of the *Jews*, had prepar'd the minds of the people to ſuch ſort of expreſſions as were raiſed above the preſent ſubject.

And certainly if one takes but the pains to conſider the wiſdom and beauty of the authors who writ theſe prophetical books on the one ſide, and the character of the writers of the New Teſtament on the other, he would perceive, that if theſe words, *That it might be fulfilled*, were of neceſſity to be changed into theſe, *As one may perceive a ſort of completion of ſuch or ſuch paſſages in the Old Teſtament*, yet notwithſtanding that, the moſt part of thoſe quotations would evince an exact accompliſhment, and the oracles which they alledge would bear a juſt proportion to thoſe events which are related by the evangeliſts in our Saviour's life.

Can any thing be more ſingular than the prophecy in the ſeventh of *Iſaiah*, of the Meſſiah's being born of a virgin; of the piercing of his hands and feet *Pſal.* XXII: of the mixture of gall which was offered him to drink, hinted at *Pſalm* LX. 22. of his being ſold for thirty pieces of ſilver: *Zechar.* XI. 3. or then ſeveral others of a like nature, which at preſent I ſhall not ſtand to reckon up.

It muſt be confeſſed however, that theſe oracles are interwoven for the moſt part with matters relating to events happening in the time when each prophet lived, or which ſeem to be applicable perſonally to the prophets.

Three orders or reaſons may be conceived, which will juſtifie the wiſdom of God in the ordering of theſe oracles in a way which ſeems ſo contrary to the common practice of the world.

The firſt order contains reaſons drawn from the perſon of the Meſſiah himſelf of whom we ſpeak.

The ſecond order contains thoſe which ariſe from the conſideration of the people amongſt whom the Meſſiah was to be born.

The third contains thoſe reaſons which reſpect other nations amongſt whom the Meſſiah was to be preached. I ſhall examine theſe three ſorts by themſelves, and I hope that we may gather from thence, that the eternal wiſdom preſided over this mixture of theſe oracles which relate to the Meſſiah, with other idea's which ſeem to be wholly foreign to the ſubject.

In ſhort, it may be urged, That the belief of a Meſſiah form'd of ſo apparent contradictions, cannot eaſily be received of the ſuddain. A

Meſſiah of the ſeed of *David*, whom *David* calls his *Lord*: a Meſſiah, who complains that he is *forſaken by God*, whom however he ought to adore: A Meſſiah born with the weakneſſes of youth, who at the ſame time is called a *mighty God*, and the *father of eternity*, &c.

However, theſe idea's which ſeem ſo oppoſite ought of neceſſity to have been ſeparated by the prophets, leaſt they ſhould have been looked upon as chimerical deſcriptions, and incompatible in one and the ſame ſubject.

A ſecond reflexion which may be made upon this matter, is, That the *Jews* were bound not only to preſerve their oracles, but alſo to execute them in part. Thus for inſtance, there was a neceſſity for them to reject the Meſſiah, to deliver him up to the *Gentiles* to be crucified; there was a neceſſity that their puniſhment ſhould be as ſignal as their crime, and that they ſhould be diſperſed over the world, after the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, as the prophets have clearly ſhewn. Now how could all this have ever been effected, if the deſcription of the Meſſiah by the prophets had been as hiſtorical as that of the apoſtles, or the evangeliſts, who gave us only a narrative of matters of fact.

In a word, was it not the intereſt of the *Gentiles*, to whom the goſpel was to be preached, that theſe oracles ſhould be ſcattered up and down the writings of theſe ancient authors? They were to be called upon the rejection of the *Jews*: The *Jews* were bound to preſerve the books of the Old Teſtament, after they were caſt off by God, that the authority of theſe books, and theſe oracles, might be beyond all conteſt, as teſtimonies with which we are furniſhed by the adverſe party, which ought to have place, until the fulneſs of the *Gentiles* ſhould profeſs Chriſtianity. Let any one therefore judge if it was not neceſſary in this ſtate of affairs, that there ſhould be ſome obſcurity in the prophetical deſcriptions, and and by conſequence that this interweaving of foreign idea's with thoſe which concerned the Meſſiah, as alſo this diſperſion of the oracles through different places of the ſacred writers was not neceſſary, and ſo much the more as they were uttered upon ſeveral occaſions by different authors.

And we may affirm it, as a certainty, That according to the purpoſe of God, this obſcurity did not hinder either *Jews* or *Pagans* from perceiving thoſe *ruling* idea's of a Meſſiah, when they read the Old Teſtament. Neither was the diſperſion of theſe oracles through ſo many different places, any greater hindrance to their application, ſince the *Jews* laid it down as a conſtant maxime, That the accompliſhment of every thing which we find to be foretold as great and illuſtrious by the prophets, ought to be looked for in the perſon of the Meſſiah, when the events of a nearer date did not anſwer to the greatneſs or magnificence of the predictions.

Several ages had paſſed from the time in which the prophet had foretold that the Meſſiah was to be born at *Bethlehem*, and yet we ſee that the idea of it continued very freſh amongſt the *Jews*, in our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt's time, as is plain from the anſwer which they gave to *Herod*.

There are ſeveral other examples might be given, which ſhew that the *Jews* in our Saviour's time applyed the very ſame oracles to the Meſſiah

which

which we do; and without queſtion, if it had not been ſo, the apoſtles would firſt have proved that theſe oracles had relation to the Meſſiah, which they took for granted, as a thing conſtantly acknowledged, whereas now they only endeavoured in the goſpel to juſtifie that Jeſus Chriſt was the Meſſiah, by ſhewing one by one that all the characters which the *Jews* attributed to the Meſſiah, were to be found in him.

Beſides, it is manifeſt from our Saviour's explication of the CX *Pſalm*; that though the *Jews* could not conceive the ſolution of that difficulty which naturally appears in thoſe words, *The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, ſit thou at my right hand*, yet afterwards they immediately applied that oracle to the Meſſiah, without ſeeking after any other ſubjects to which they might apply it, as the *Jews* endeavour to do at this day.

But after theſe remarks upon the mixture of thoſe oracles which relate to the Meſſiah, with others which ſeem to be of a more foreign nature, we ought to come to ſome general rules by which we are to apply the ancient oracles to the Meſſiah.

CHAP. VIII.

General Rules for the Underſtanding of ancient Oracles, and for the Application of them to the Meſſiah.

I. AS it appears very natural to conceive, that the moſt ancient revelations ought to be expreſſed in the moſt general terms, becauſe they were furtheſt from the time of their accompliſhment, and ſo one ought to find in them a more imperfect delineation of the deſign of God: yet it is viſible however, that they ought to contribute very much to the underſtanding of thoſe later Oracles, becauſe if theſe later ones do really contain a more particular explication of his deſign in ſending the Meſſiah into the world, yet they ought always to follow thoſe idea's which God at firſt made uſe of to make his deſign known in the world.

II. It is natural to grant, that when God had told the *Jews* by *Jacob* and *Balaam*, that the coming of the Meſſiah was not ſuddainly to happen, if he intended to bring them to a certain knowledge of the Meſſiah after a long revolution of years, by thoſe ceremonial and judicial laws which he eſtabliſhed, that he ought to breed them up in an expectation of the Meſſiah, by lively idea's, and by oracles which ſhould particularly explain the manner and circumſtances of his appearance.

III. It is no leſs natural to acknowledge, that when God promiſed ſome illuſtrious perſon, or ſome great advantage to the Jewiſh nation, he did it only to entertain the people with an expectation of the Meſſiah, and upon that account, that he might and ought to joyn the promiſe of the Meſſiah with it, as the principal object which the *Jews* ought always to have in view, until it ſhould actually happen.

In ſhort, there are two ſorts of oracles in the Old Teſtament: the firſt are ſuch as it is impoſſible to apply to any other beſides the Meſſiah; as for inſtance, *the place of his birth*; *the ſeed of the woman ſhall break the ſerpents head*; *the Lord thy God will raiſe up unto thee a Prophet from the midſt of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me*; *unto him ye ſhall hearken* (*l*). Whereupon he that added the relation of *Moſes*'s death, takes notice that after that there aroſe up no Prophet in *Iſrael* like unto *Moſes*.

The ſecond are ſuch as ſeem to agree in part to ſome body elſe beſides the Meſſiah, tho' we may find there alſo ſuch particular characters, that it is impoſſible to apply them perfectly; and in their utmoſt extent, according to the whole force of their expreſſion to any other ſubject beſides the Meſſiah. And ſo *Balaam* ſeems to have ſpoken of *David*, *Numb.* XXIII. as *Julian* the apoſtate maintains, and of his victories over the *Moabites* in the ſame place where he promiſes the Meſſiah, and where he ſpeaks of the manner of his ſubduing the children of *Seth*; and ſo *David* in the ſecond *Pſalm* ſpeaks of the oppoſitions which he met with, in his advancement to the throne, but in terms too great and too emphatical to be apply'd to him alone.

Thoſe principles which I have now eſtabliſhed, that God promiſed the Meſſiah in general terms, but without any intention of ſending him into the world, until ſeveral ages had been paſſed, gave riſe to theſe two ſorts of oracles. On the one ſide, there was a neceſſity of explaining this promiſe diſtinctly from time to time. And on the other ſide, there was a neceſſity of accommodating himſelf to the deſires of the *Jews*, by joyning theſe idea's with every thing that was great and conſiderable in thoſe events, and in thoſe perſons to whom the prophetick ſpirit intended to add a luſtre by its predictions.

The *Jews* are agreed at preſent, as they were alſo in our Saviour's time, in the application of the moſt part of thoſe oracles in the Old Teſtament, which the Chriſtians apply to the Meſſiah, and if they diſpute ſome of them, which they explain in a ſenſe perfectly forced, yet at leaſt they cannot diſpute theſe following truths.

I. That the moſt part of thoſe oracles which we apply to the Meſſiah, were apply'd in the ſame manner by the Jewiſh Doctors in our Saviour's time: as the CX *Pſalm*, for inſtance, which has relation to the nature and glory of the Meſſiah; the II *Pſalm*, which has reſpect to the conſpiracy of the princes and the people againſt the Meſſiah; that place in *Micah* which fixes the birth of the Meſſiah to *Bethlehem*, &c.

II. That as they thought themſelves obliged to make two Meſſiahs, becauſe of the apparent contradictions which are to be found in thoſe various events which are apply'd to the Meſſiah in thoſe predictions; ſome perfectly glorious, and others every way contemptible: ſo there is no injuſtice done, in explaining thoſe oracles which at firſt ſeem only to have relation to one ſingle perſon, of the Meſſiah, and of ſome other perſon.

III. That ſince they themſelves believe, that their anceſtors might lawfully paſs from one ſenſe to another in their explications of thoſe oracles, ſo that they were permitted to apply an oracle to ſome other ſubject, which did not ſeem to agree exactly enough to that ſubject which their

(*l*) Gen. iii. 15. Deut. xviii. 15. Deut. xxxiv. 10.

their anceſtors had firſt in view, as the particular ſubject concerning which the oracle treated: ſo it is not only juſt, but neceſſary too, to paſs from one ſubject to another as the Apoſtles have actually done.

IV. That we ought to pay a much greater deference to the opinion of the ancient *Jews*, than of thoſe, who have been ſowred by their miſeries and diſputes to ſuch a degree, that they have loſt that principle of equity which keeps men from denying the moſt evident truths, and which have been the moſt univerſally acknowledged by a whole nation, that was not prepoſſeſſed with ſo great a degree of obſtinacy.

But we ought to obſerve, beſides, that this ſeeming confuſion of thoſe oracles which relate to the Meſſiah, with other ſubjects treated of by the Prophets, aroſe from ſeveral cauſes.

I. From the Prophet's often joyning the idea's of the principal promiſe, the ſending of the Meſſiah, with the promiſe of thoſe means which were abſolutely neceſſary for the accompliſhment of that promiſe, as the preſervation of the *Jews* for inſtance. So the captivity of the *Iſraelites* in *Egypt*, and their departure from thence, with their ſettling in the land of *Canaan*, which he had promiſed them before, were foretold, as neceſſary means in the order of Providence, to the execution of the great deſign of God.

For ſo the *Babyloniſh* captivity, and their deliverance there from, which are both foretold, are foretold as ſteps towards the execution of the promiſe of ſending the Meſſiah.

And ſo likewiſe when they foretold the perſecutions by *Antiochus*, and the other neighbouring nations, they alſo foretell the deliverance which God would grant to the *Jews*, and their re-eſtabliſhment until the birth of the Meſſiah, which was the accompliſhment of that great promiſe.

II. This ſeeming confuſion aroſe from the writing of theſe books piece by piece, which afterwards were put into this order, without having always a regard to the time in which they were writ, and without taking notice of all the occaſions which engaged the Prophets to write. And thus we ſee the prophecies which relate to the Meſſiah joyned to ſeveral other tranſactions, and to ſeveral other predictions, whoſe connexion is not always ſo very evident.

III. It ariſes from the writing of the prophecies each by themſelves, ſo that all thoſe of the ſame Prophet were put together as they came out, making only a new chapter in the work; whereas they ought to be conſidered rather with relation to the matter, than to the order in which they lye in the book, as we have it at the preſent. For the Prophets often borrow their light from what they themſelves had ſaid ſome time before, or from what ſome other Prophet had foretold, which ought to be obſerved particularly of thoſe who lived about the ſame time.

But beſides thoſe rules which I propoſed in the beginning of this chapter, and beſides thoſe obſervations of the joyning the oracles which relate to the Meſſiah with other ſubjects, I muſt add two rules more, which may be uſeful in determining the ſenſe of great numbers of oracles which are expreſſed in figurative terms. The firſt is, that it is natural to conceive that when the Prophets were to ſpeak of the Meſſiah, and when they were intent upon the deſcription of his kingdom, they ſhould make

uſe

uſe of expreſſions which ſeem'd to foretell a ſort of overturning of nature, which ſhould happen at that time: but then theſe expreſſions ought to be underſtood in a figurative ſenſe, in the ſame ſpiritual ſenſe in which the Chriſtians underſtood them, as the famous *Maimonides* allows in that paſſage of *Iſaiah*, where the *wolf* and the *lamb* are ſaid to feed together (*m*).

Secondly, ſince the Meſſiah is deſcribed as one who ſhould unite in his own perſon, the glory of the Divinity, and the meanneſs of the human nature together, we ought to underſtand thoſe oracles in ſuch a manner, that what is *great* in thoſe prophetical deſcriptions, ſhould not contradict the more contemptible part, when we conſider the Meſſiah as cloathed with all the meanneſſes of the human nature. Theſe idea's which are often joyned in one and the ſame oracles, ought to be exactly applyed to the different conſideration which the Prophets had of the Meſſiah, or to thoſe various ſtates through which they themſelves aſſures us that the Meſſiah was to paſs.

An intelligent reader will eaſily judge, that I might have added a third rule to the two former; which is, That when a perſon, who has all the characters of a Prophet, applys an old oracle to any ſubject, one cannot reaſonably diſpute his application. This the Chriſtians aſſure us was done by the Apoſtles in a very great number of oracles. But becauſe this ſuppoſes a prophetick character in the Apoſtles before it has been eſtabliſhed by ſolid proofs, I ſhall wave the propoſal of it at preſent.

After theſe general remarks I ſhall gather together thoſe oracles in the Old Teſtament, which relate to the Meſſiah; I might here follow the order of the matters, by bringing under each article thoſe oracles which relate to it, which would give a great light to the ſubject, as *Euſebius* has rightly obſerved, and as he has practiſed himſelf in his books *de Demonſtratione Evangelicâ*. However, I rather choſe to follow the order of time in which theſe oracles were uttered, which did not ſeem improper to explain thoſe truths which are contained in thoſe oracles.

In ſhort, this is of great importance: I. Becauſe it is very natural to conſider the ſeries of God's deſign, and the connexion which may be found in thoſe idea's which are made uſe of to expreſs it.

II. Becauſe of the neceſſity of the encreaſe of light in the Revelations, proportionably as the time drew near; ſo that, it is of uſe to obſerve how the Divine wiſdom follow'd this natural order in making the later oracles clearer than the former, and in hinting by little and little a greater number of circumſtances, by which it was neceſſary to explain them.

III. Becauſe this ſerves to give us a very ſtrong proof, that God intended to furniſh us from the Scriptures themſelves, with that which ſhould fix us in a belief of this capital truth in our religion. In ſhort, when the truth of each of the books in the Old Teſtament is once approved, and their age ſet down, it appears that ſeveral Prophets did agree wonderfully without any concert, in the explication of the ſame truths at ſeveral times, and in ſeveral places and circumſtances, which hinder men for the moſt part from agreeing in the moſt common matters, which are the ſubjects of their reflexions.

I have

(*m*) Lib. de *Regibus*, cap. xii.

I have already conſidered that the wiſdom of God follow'd rules very conformable to the condition and inclinations of the Patriarchs, when it ſpoke of the Meſſiah. We may ſee the ſame conduct in the following times.

So ſince God had promiſed children to *Adam* in *Abel*'s ſtead, one may ſee that he alſo promiſed *David* a ſon who ſhould ſet upon his throne. He explains almoſt all the circumſtances of his coming, his humiliation, his exaltation, the oppoſitions he ſhould meet with, the victories he ſhould obtain, and his offices, prophetical, prieſtly, and royal.

One ſee's afterwards that the Prophets explain in a more particular manner all theſe idea's which *David* had already propoſed. *Iſaiah* ſpeaks of his birth by a virgin, of his ſpiritual gifts, of his miracles, of his ſufferings, of his reſurrection, of his calling of all nations in to his worſhip, and of his caſting off the *Jews*.

Thoſe who come after point out the place particularly, and the town where the Meſſiah was to be born; they deſcribe his covenant, and the calling of the Gentiles to the ſervice of the God of *Iſrael*.

In ſhort, they deſcribe both the character of the forerunner of the Meſſiah, and the empire under which he was to appear, and the very year in which he was to dye, as *Daniel* particularly doth.

I cannot undertake to relate all the oracles which are contained in the books of the Old Teſtament, they are ſo very numerous. But I hope at leaſt to mark the more principal, and the moſt illuſtrious ones, and to explain them in ſuch a manner, that all ſhall be obliged to acknowledge, I. That God deſigned to give infallible proofs to his church, of his deſign in ſending the Meſſiah into the world, and to preſerve the continual remembrance of him, as of a perſon who was promiſed to give all comfort to his church, and whoſe coming ſhould bring ſalvation to all mankind. II. That the care which he took in ſpecifying all the circumſtances of his coming into the world, ſhew that he deſigned to prevent the ſcandal which the abject life and death of a Meſſiah might produce, and the falſe judgments which men might form of the works of a Divine wiſdom, when they only judge of them by the outſide. III. That he deſigned to give an infallible proof, that this ſending of the Meſſiah, was the work of his wiſdom and fidelity, which at laſt accompliſhed a thing, the deſign whereof had been propoſed to mankind immediately after the fall.

CHAP. IX.

Of thoſe Oracles concerning the Meſſiah which are to be found in the Book of GENESIS.

BEGIN with thoſe Oracles which are contained in the book of *Geneſis*, ſince it is convenient to touch them all over again in few words.

The

The first oracle is comprized in these terms, *Gen.* III. 15. *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

This oracle has considerable advantages, tho' it is expressed in figurative terms. God uttered it in the beginning of the world, after he had given sentence against *Adam*, and the woman, and the serpent in a very sensible manner, even under a human shape, if we may dare to affirm it. He uttered it before the head of all mankind, which ought to make it considerable to all his posterity. He expresses it by an allusion to the nature of the temptation, and to the form of the serpent, which the tempter had took upon him. He preserves thereby the memory of the temptation, by inspiring all mankind with an invincible hatred against all serpents in general, tho' the tempter had took the shape but of one particular kind, for an instrument to accomplish his design.

In short, this oracle clearly shews, I. That it should be particularly the seed of the woman: *Adam* not being touched at. II. That the seed of the woman, that is to say the Messiah, should destroy the power of the serpent expressed by the head, that is to say the power of the Devil. III. That this seed should however receive a considerable wound from the Devil, tho' it should only touch his heel, the least considerable part of the Messiah. IV. That all the blessings which God should give to mankind after the fall, should be grounded upon the sending of this seed into the world: this is more clearly expressed by God's telling *Abraham*, *That in thy seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed.* (*n*).

That this oracle *Gen.* III. has relation to the Messiah, is plain: I. Because it is the source and abridgment of the whole revelation. II. Because all the ancient *Jews* in effect understood it so. III. Because the Apostles, in following the idea's of the synagogue plainly referred them to the Messiah, by the allusions which they make to them (*o*): *John* XII. *Romans* XVI. II *Cor.* XI. I *John* III.

The second oracle which relates to the Messiah, is contained in these terms, when God spoke to *Abraham*; *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*

This oracle is very illustrious: I. By the person of *Abraham*, whom God made the depositary of it, and who made himself ready to sacrifice his own Son. II. By the frequent repetitions which God made to this Patriarch, using in effect all those ways which he afterwards follow'd in his revelations to the Patriarchs, for fifty years together, from the year 2083. to the year 2133. of the world. III. Because it was accompanied by the circumcision, so that tho' it foretold that the advantages should be in common to all nations, yet it limited the Messiah to be born of *Abraham*'s seed.

It also intimates very clearly, I. That the blessings which it promises should be in common to all nations. II. That this blessing should be quite of another nature from temporal ones, as the encrease for instance, and the power of *Abraham*'s posterity, which had been promised to him before. 8. *Paul*'s reflexion *Gal.* III. 8. That God spake of seed in the singular number is very remarkable, and so much the more, because the *Jews* made a like observation upon a parallel place in the Old Testament. As

(*n*) Gen. xxii. 18. (*o*) *Targum in h. l.*

As God repeated this promiſe when he ſpoke to *Iſaac* in the year 2200, and to *Jacob* in the year 2245. *Gen.* XXVIII. 14. *And thy ſeed ſhall be as the duſt of the earth; and thou ſhalt ſpread abroad to the weſt, and to the eaſt, and to the north, and to the ſouth: and in thee, and in thy ſeed, ſhall all the families of the earth be bleſſed*, ſo one ought to repeat again the ſame reflexions. This ought only to be added, That God reſtrained the honour of bringing forth the Meſſiah to *Jacob* the Son of *Iſaac*, that the *Edomites* might not come in to challenge the right, as I have very particularly explained in my reflexions upon *Geneſis*.

We come now to the oracle which *Jacob* gave in the year 2315. It is one of the cleareſt predictions in the whole Bible, and it is expreſſed in theſe terms: Judah, *thou art he whom thy brethren ſhall praiſe; thy hand ſhall be in the neck of thine enemies: thy father's children ſhall bow down before thee.* Judah *is a lions whelp; from the prey my ſon thou art gone up: he ſtooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who ſhall rouze him up? The ſcepter ſhall not depart from* Judah, *nor a law-giver from between his feet, until* Shiloh *come, and unto him ſhall the gathering of the people be. Binding his fole unto the vine; and his aſſes colt unto the choice vine; he waſhed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes. His eyes ſhall be read with wine, and his teeth white with milk.* *Gen.* XLIX. 8.—12. I know very well, that ſome of the *Jews* have pretended, that *Moſes* ought to be underſtood for *Shilah*; But this is ſo ridiculous an opinion, that there is not the leaſt probability to maintain it: What ſcepter had *Judah* before *Moſes* came? How was *Moſes* the expectation of the *Gentiles*, and the object of their hope?

And indeed, the body of the Jewiſh nation are agreed, that this oracle was meant of the Meſſiah, ſo *Onkelos* the *Chaldee* paraphraſt, ſo the *Jeruſalem Targum*, and *Jonathan's*, ſo *R. Salomon Jarchi*, *Abenezra*, and *Kimchi* are agreed.

Now theſe reflexions may be naturally drawn from this oracle which *Jacob* uttered upon his death-bed.

I. This oracle is found amongſt a great number of oracles which concern the other tribes of the *Iſraelites*, and which were accompliſhed as to every tribe.

II. This oracle contains ſeveral particular events which relate to private tranſactions in the tribe of *Judah*.

III. This oracle was, as it were, *Jacob's* will in favour of *Judah*, at a time when he divided amongſt his children their portions which they were to expect from him.

IV. This was a preference of *Judah*, who was but the fourth, to *Reuben* who was the eldeſt, and who by conſequence ought to have been the head of his family. The ſcepter, and the authority of legiſlator was promiſed to *Judah*, which did not belong to him by the right of his birth.

Jacob therefore prepared his children to look for an accompliſhment of thoſe promiſes made to *Abraham* in *Judah*, as well for the kings who were to be deſcended from him, as for the nations of the earth, who were to be bleſſed in *Abraham's* ſeed.

But we muſt go yet further; I ſhall therefore obſerve, I. That this prophecy particularly regarded the tribe of *Judah*, as all the preceding

and

and following oracles concern'd those tribes, whose heads were then named by *Jacob*.

II. That this prophecy concerns the tribe of *Judah*, as settled in the land of *Canaan*, by a distinct establishment from the other tribes. In short, it is certain that the tribe of *Judah* had some superiority; Thus God for instance commanded that tribe to march the first, *Numb.* II. & X. Its heads offered their presents first, *Numb.* VII. 11, 12, 83. In *Joshua*'s time this tribe took its division without drawing lots for it. One see's that God ordered the tribe of *Judah* to lead the people out to the conquest of the rest of the country. One see's the same prerogatives in the book of *Judges*, tho' they were often of other tribes. From *David*'s time to the taking of *Jerusalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, the kings were all of that tribe; and *Zorobabel* afterwards headed those who returned out of *Chaldea*. The book of the *Chronicles* names the tribe of *Judah* first; *Herod* was the first king who was wholly a stranger.

III. That *Jacob* supposed that the tribe of *Judah* should be in possession of a form of government, and of a community till the coming of the Messiah. This was all very proper, and indeed we see that this tribe continued under its own governours, after the other tribes had been transported, II *Kings* XVII. 18. It almost swallowed up *Benjamin* and *Levi*, who settled in their country; and indeed *Josephus* assures us, That there were but few of the ten tribes who came back again into *Judea* under *Ezra*, for the greatest part of them stayed beyond *Euphrates*. And we see that at last they gave their name to the whole country.

IV. That this oracle was fulfilled by degrees. This I have observed already of the preheminency of the tribe of *Judah* before *David*'s time, which was a step to the advancement of it to the throne. And the lessening of their dignity, which was to be entirely taken away when the Messiah came, had also the same gradations. *David* was set upon the throne over all *Israel*; but his house lost the government over ten tribes in his grandson *Rehoboam*'s time. His successors were tributary to the neighbouring princes: whereas *David* carried his empire to the walls of *Babylon*, tho' afterwards the *Babylonians* subdued the *Jews*, and deposed the kings of *Judah*. At last they absolutely lost all that authority which they had hitherto kept. They recovered a little in the person of *Zorobabel*, and tho' they were soon after invaded by the *Seleucidæ*, yet the *Maccabees* preserved them a little, till *Herod* and the *Romans* took away all those remnants which they had yet left.

In carrying these views of this oracle further, we may yet further observe, I. That God intended to oblige the *Israelites* to wait for the sceptre in the tribe of *Judah*. It must be there before it could depart thence. It was natural to conceive, that the *Jews* were to look yet much further than *David*. Those words, *It shall not depart*, denote a continuance of the sceptre in the house of *David* for some considerable time.

II. It is easie to comprehend a lessening of the dignity in the term *lawgiver*, [See *Judges* V. 14. מחקקים] which God seems to have made use of, as a mark of the fall, which I have observed in the person of *Zorobabel*, who as to the time was about the middle of the oracle.

III. In

III. In a word, it is eaſie to acknowledge that this oracle aſſigns the *epocha* in groſs for the time of the coming of the Meſſiah, *viz.* the ruin of that authority and power which the *Jews*, properly ſo called from the tribe of *Judah*, ſhould enjoy after their re-eſtabliſhment. God could not explain himſelf more particularly, in ſtating the preciſe time when this thing ſhould happen.

There are two other very conſiderable oracles; one uttered by *Balaam* in the year 2553; before the king of the *Moabites*, who had ſent for him to curſe the people of *Iſrael* that lay in the plains; the other uttered the ſame year by *Moſes* the famous legiſlator of the *Jews*; the firſt is inſerted by *Moſes* in the XXIV *Chapter* of *Numbers*; the other is in the XVIII of *Deuteronomy*.

The firſt is in theſe words; *I ſhall ſee him, but not now: I ſhall behold him, but not nigh: there ſhall come a ſtar out of* Jacob, *and a ſcepter ſhall riſe out of* Iſrael, *and ſhall ſmite all the corners of* Moab, *and deſtroy all the children of* Seth: *And* Edom *ſhall be a poſſeſſion,* Seir *alſo ſhall be a poſſeſſion for his enemies, and* Iſrael *ſhall do valiantly. Out of* Jacob *ſhall come he that ſhall have dominion, and ſhall deſtroy him that remaineth of the city.*

One ought to obſerve, that *Balaam*'s character, the preſence of the king and the elders of *Moab*, and all the circumſtances in which it was uttered, do advance its authority conſiderably.

But the turn of his expreſſions is equally ſingular and remarkable: I. He ſpeaks of the Meſſiah as of a ſtar, hinting out to us the celeſtial nature of the Meſſiah: whereas hitherto God had only deſcribed him under the figure of a bare man: tho' the other was made ſufficiently intelligible, when the deſtruction of the empire of the tempter, and the right of procuring a bleſſing unto all the nations of the earth which he was perſonally to enjoy, were attributed to him; things infinitely beyond the power and condition of mankind to perform, were attributed to him. II. He obſerves, That this perſon of whom he ſpeaks ſuch magnificent things, ought however to be deſcended from *Jacob*; which ratifies *Jacob*'s prophecy in favour of *Judah*. III. Tho' he hints very clearly at the effects of thoſe bleſſings and temporal victories which *Jacob*'s poſterity was to obtain over their neighbours, yet at the ſame time he inſinuates plainly enough, that the beſtowing of the bleſſing which all the nations of the world ſhould obtain, was to be reſerved to *Jacob*'s ſeed; when he refuſed to retract thoſe promiſes of bleſſing which God had made to *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, to which oracles he made a ſenſible alluſion.

And it is very important to conſider that the *Jews* always applyed this oracle to the Meſſiah, as may be ſeen by their *Chaldee* paraphraſt; and it was acknowledged ſo generally, that the famous *Achiba*, who lived under the emperour *Hadrian*, pretended that *Barchocheba* was the Meſſiah, becauſe his name was *Chochab*, which is a *ſtar* in *Hebrew*; as if God intended to mark that impoſtor for the true Meſſiah, by foretelling what name he ſhould be called by.

The oracle which *Moſes* uttered a little before his death, is very conſiderable. The people being terrified with the manner of God's ſpeaking to them upon mount *Sinai*, deſired that God would no longer ſpeak as he had done before, but that *Moſes* ſhould give them an account of what-

ever God ſhould command. Hereupon God conſents to their requeſt, and promiſed them by *Moſes*, that he would raiſe them up a Prophet like unto *Moſes*, to whom they ought to hearken, upon pain of being cut off.

He that made the addition to the laſt book of *Moſes*, wherein his death is deſcribed, takes notice, that there never roſe up afterwards a Prophet in *Iſrael* like to *Moſes*: if it was *Ezra* who made that addition, then here is a plain and clear deciſion againſt the *Jews*, ſome of whom aſſert that *Joſhua* or *Jeremiah* was the Prophet whom *Moſes* promiſed: if it was *Eleazar*, who liv'd in *Joſhua*'s time, then here *Joſhua* at leaſt is excluded from this priviledge of being deſigned by *Moſes*.

But it is to no purpoſe to ſtop at ſuch frivolous objections: one needs only obſerve *Moſes*'s character to take notice of four certain marks of *Moſes*'s prophecies, which advance him infinitely above all the other Prophets. I. He had all the ſorts of revelations which are generally found amongſt all the Prophets. II. He was illuſtrious for great numbers of miracles. III. He not only reform'd the errors and falſe ways of worſhip then prevailing amongſt the *Jews*, but he ſet up a new worſhip, and a new form of religion. IV. He introduced this law, and this way of worſhipping God, by ſuch a converſation with God, as one ſee's amongſt two intimate friends: in which of the Prophets may theſe four characters be found.

The *Galileans* themſelves teſtified plainly that theſe characters ought only to be found in the perſon of the Meſſiah, when they ſaw the miracles of Jeſus Chriſt, *John* VI. 14. and the *Jews* acknowledged the ſame in our Saviours time, when they applyed that oracle to the Meſſiah, *John* I. 45.

But if theſe oracles were obſcurely hinted at in this oracle, one may ſee them clearly apply'd to the Meſſiah in the following oracles, proportionably as the revelation encreaſed, and as God unravelled the idea's of theſe ancient oracles by explaining them more particularly by thoſe Prophets whom he afterwards raiſed up. This may clearly be ſeen, if we paſs on to thoſe oracles which were uttered by *David*, and the other Prophets who lived about his time.

CHAP. X.

Of the Oracles which concern the Meſſiah in the Book of Psalms.

THESE were the Oracles which were the ſubjects of the meditations of the faithful from the year of the world 2553, in which *Moſes* dyed, until *David*'s time, who was particularly choſen by God to be the only man of *his family*, which was alſo ſeparated from all the other families of *Judah*, who came from *Pharez*, from whom the Meſſiah was to be deſcended.

I have

I have obſerved in another place, that in all probability God raiſed *David* to the throne, only to make the genealogy of that family better known, from which the Meſſiah was to ſpring.

As this double advancement of *David*, one to the throne of *Iſrael*, the other to be the father to the Meſſiah, ought to have inſpired him with lively reſentments of gratitude, and as his oracles would be much more famous, being uttered by a royal Prophet, and the rather becauſe God employ'd him in the making a juſt regulation of the ſervice of the ſanctuary; ſo we ſee that *David* employ'd his pen in giving more diſtinct idea's of that Meſſiah which he promiſed them.

The name *Meſſiah* properly ſignifies a perſon conſecrated by anointing to be King, Prieſt, or Prophet. This name was particularly applyed by *David*, and the Prophets who lived after him, to that holy ſeed which God had promiſed to *Abraham*'s family by *Iſaac*, by *Jacob*, by *Judah*, and by *David*; and one may obſerve in *David*'s *Pſalms*, and in the Prophets of his time, that they gave the name of Meſſiah to the promiſed ſeed, under one or other of theſe three ſenſes.

The characters both of a Prophet and a Prieſt, tho' each of them are auguſt enough, yet yield to that of a King. Theſe are the different idea's which *David*, and the Prophets of that time follow'd in all the variety of their deſcriptions.

But it is not my deſign to give a particular account of all thoſe oracles which deſcribe theſe different characters, for fear of being exceſſively long: ſo I ſhall content myſelf with obſerving two things: I. That *David* alone uttered more oracles than all the Prophets who came before him. II. That theſe oracles of *David* concerning the Meſſiah are clearer than all the precedent ones.

Now, I ſay, that *David* alone uttered more oracles than any one Prophet who came before him; thus in the XL. *Pſalm* he explains the decree by which the Meſſiah became the ſervant of God, and clothed himſelf with the form of a ſervant, to offer unto God a more perfect obedience than that which had formerly been offered by burnt-offerings and ſacrifices. He deſcribes the meaſure and the nature of his miniſtry, which was to conſiſt in the inſtruction of the people, in righteouſneſs, truth, and the ſalvation of God. *Pſalm* XL. 7——11. *Sacrifice and offering thou didſt not deſire, mine ears haſt thou opened: burnt-offering and ſin-offering haſt thou not required. Then ſaid I, Lo I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteouſneſs in the great congregation: lo I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knoweſt: I have not hid thy righteouſneſs within my heart, I have declared thy faithfulneſs, and thy ſalvation: I have not concealed thy loving kindneſs, and thy truth, from the great congregation.*

In the XVI *Pſalm* he deſcribes the inviolable ſtedfaſtneſs of the Meſſiah to the ſervice of God, who had ſent him to form a great people, with the manner of his deliverance by God from all the powers of the world, by raiſing him up from the dead, and afterwards receiving him into glory. *Pſalm* XVI. 8, &c. *I have ſet the Lord always before me: becauſe he is at my right hand, I ſhall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoyceth; my fleſh alſo ſhall reſt in hope. For thou wilt*

not leave my ſoul in hell; neither wilt thou ſuffer thy holy One to ſee corruption: thou wilt ſhew me the path of life; in thy preſence is fulneſs of joy: at thy right hand there are pleaſures for evermore.

In the XXII *Pſalm* he deſcribes the agonies through which the Meſſiah was to paſs, the manner of his death, the victory which he ſhould obtain over his enemies, and the converſion of thoſe very nations which had caſt him off.

In the CIX *Pſalm* he ſpeaks of the oppreſſions of the Meſſiah, pronouncing great numbers of imprecations againſt that very perſon who ſhould ſignalize himſelf by perſecuting his innocence. *Hold not thy peace O God of my praiſe: for the mouth of the wicked, and the mouth of the deceitful are opened againſt me; they have ſpoken againſt me with a lying tongue,* verſe 1, 2. *Set thou a wicked man over him, and let Satan ſtand at his right hand. When he ſhall be judged, let him be condemned, and let his prayer become ſin. Let his days be few, and let another take his office,* verſe 6, 7, 8. *Becauſe that he remembered not to ſhew mercy, but perſecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even ſlay the broken in heart. As he loved curſing, ſo let it come to him: as he delighted not in bleſſing, ſo let it be far from him. As he clothed himſelf with curſing like as with his garment, ſo let it come into his bowels like water, and like oyl into his bones,* verſe 16, 17, 18.

In the CXIX *Pſalm* he carries this argument further, in his deſcription of the zeal of the Meſſiah for the houſe of God, and of thoſe inſultings which he ſhould meet with, and the manner of their giving him vinegar and gall to drink, with the hardning and rejection of thoſe who had uſed him in that manner. *Save me O God, for the waters are come in unto my ſoul. I ſink in deep mire, where there is no ſtanding: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me,* verſe 1, 2. *Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of Hoſts, be aſhamed for my ſake: let not thoſe that ſeek thee be confounded for my ſake, O God of* Iſrael. *Becauſe for thy ſake I have born reproach; ſhame hath covered my face. I am become a ſtranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mothers children: for the zeal of thy houſe hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen upon me,* verſe 6, 7, 8, 9. *Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heavineſs: and I looked for ſome to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me alſo gall for my meat, and in my thirſt they gave me vinegar to drink. Let their table become a ſnare before them; and that which ſhould have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkned, that they ſee not; and make their loins continually to ſhake. Pour out thy indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them,* verſe 20, 21, 22, 23, 24.

In the XCVII and XCVIII *Pſalms* he deſcribes the deſtruction of idolatry when the promiſed Saviour ſhould appear, and when God ſhould raiſe him upon his throne. *The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoyce; let the multitude of the iſles be glad thereof.* Pſalm XCVII. 1. *Confounded be all they that ſerve graven images, that boaſt themſelves of idols: worſhip him all ye gods.* Zion *heard, and was glad, and the daughters of* Judah *rejoyced, becauſe of thy judgments, O Lord: for thou Lord art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods,* verſe 7, 8, 9. *O ſing unto the Lord a new ſong, for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm have gotten him the victory. The Lord hath made known his ſal-*

vation:

vation: his righteouſneſs hath he openly ſhew'd in the ſight of the heathen. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth towards the houſe of Iſrael: *all the ends of the earth have ſeen the ſalvation of our God. Make a joyful noiſe unto the Lord all the earth: make a loud noiſe, and rejoyce and ſing praiſe,* Pſalm XCVIII. 1——4.

In the LXVIII *Pſalm* he explains the glory of the Meſſiah, and his aſcenſion into heaven, with the effuſion of thoſe gifts which he was to ſpread abroad for the converſion of the nations, that God might dwell amongſt the moſt rebellious. *Princes ſhall come out of* Egypt, Ethiopia *ſhall ſoon ſtretch out her hands unto God: ſing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth: O ſing praiſes unto the Lord. To him who rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old; lo he doth ſend out his voice, and that a mighty voice. Aſcribe ye ſtrength unto God: his excellency is over* Iſrael, *and his ſtrength is in the clouds. O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places, the God of* Iſrael *is he that giveth ſtrength and power unto his people,* verſe 31, 32, 33, 34, 35.

The Prophets who lived in the time of *David*, or ſoon after, purſued all his idea's. One ſee's that *Nathan*, II *Sam.* VII. foretells *Solomon*'s glory, and the honour which he ſhould have in building that temple of which *David* had formed the deſign before, in ſuch a manner, that he clearly ſhews three things which will by no means agree with *Solomon*. I. That God ſhould raiſe up a ſon to *David* after his death, and place him upon his throne; whereas *Solomon* was born, and advanced to the throne by *David* himſelf. II. It was promiſed that his government ſhould be endleſs; this is not applicable to the royal poſterity of *David*, who had but twenty ſucceſſors who bore the title of kings. III. That God particularly promiſes to be the father of this promiſed ſon, which is not more applicable to *Solomon*, than to *David*, to *Joſiah*, or *Hezekiah*.

One ſee's that *Corah*'s poſterity gave that account of *Soloman*'s glory upon his marriage with the king of *Egypt*'s daughter; he ſpeaks of a throne much more auguſt then that princes was, and he repreſents to us a God conſecrated with oyl of gladneſs above his fellows. This exactly ſets forth the auguſt character of the Meſſiah, and his anointing to be the king of all nations, their Prophet, and their Prieſt. *Pſalm* XLV. 1. *My heart is inditing a good matter: I ſpeak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.* Verſe 7, 8. *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the ſcepter of thy kingdom is a right ſcepter. Thou loveſt righteouſneſs and hateſt wickedneſs; therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with oyl of gladneſs above thy fellows.* Verſe 16. *Inſtead of thy fathers ſhall be thy children whom thou maiſt make princes in all the earth.*

One ſee's the ſame Prophets inviting all nations in the XLVII *Pſalm* to acknowledge the kingdom of God: which *Daniel* afterwards deſcribes as that which the *Jews* already knew was to be governed by the Meſſiah.

One ſee's *Aſaph* deſcribing in the L *Pſalm* the manner of the Meſſiah's aſſembling all people, and of his rejecting the ancient and legal ſervice, and preſcribing a ſpiritual one, even ſacrifices of vows, and of praiſe. *Verſe* 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. *And the heavens ſhall declare his righteouſneſs: for God is judge himſelf. Hear O my people, and I will ſpeak, O* Iſrael; *and I will*

teſtifie againſt thee: I am God, even thy God. I will not reprove thee for thy ſacrifices, or thy burnt-offerings, to have been continually before me. I will take no bullock out of thy houſe, nor he-goat out of thy folds. For every beaſt of the foreſt is mine, and the cattle upon a thouſand hills.

One ſees the author of the LXXII *Pſalm* deſcribing the glory and happineſs of *Solomon*'s kingdom in ſuch a manner, that he carries his views as high as the Meſſiah at the ſame time; he foretels the continuance of his kingdom as long as the ſun and moon endures; that all the kings of the world ſhould bring preſents to him, and that all the nations of the earth ſhould worſhip before him. *Verſe* 5. *They ſhall fear thee as long as the ſun and moon endure, throughout all generations.* Verſe 8. *He ſhall have dominion alſo from ſea to ſea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.* Verſe 11. *All kings ſhall fall down before him, all nations ſhall ſerve him.* Verſe 17, 18, 19. *His name ſhall endure for ever; his name ſhall be continued as long as the ſun, and men ſhall be bleſſed in him; all nations ſhall call him bleſſed. Bleſſed be the Lord God of* Iſrael, *who only doth wondrous things: and bleſſed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with all his glory; Amen and Amen.*

One ſees that *Ethan* the *Ezrahite*, who is repreſented to us as the wiſeſt man in that age after *Solomon*, explains the promiſe made to *David* of a ſon who ſhould reign for ever, and whoſe throne ſhould be immoveable in the LXXXIX *Pſalm*. This agrees to none but the Meſſiah, whom he deſcribes as the firſt-born of the princes of the earth, and as the ſon of God in a manner, which is not applicable to any of *David*'s poſterity, except only to the Meſſiah. *Verſe* 19, 20. *Then thou ſpakeſt in viſions, to the holy one, and ſay'ſt, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one choſen out of the people. I have found* David *my ſervant; with my holy oyl have I anointed him.* Verſe 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29. *My faithfulneſs and my mercy ſhall be with him; and in my name ſhall his horn be exalted. I will ſet his hand alſo in the ſea, and his right hand in the rivers. He ſhall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my Salvation. Alſo I will make him my firſt-born, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant ſhall ſtand faſt with him. His ſeed alſo will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.* Verſe 33, 34, 35, 36, 37. *Nevertheleſs my loving kindneſs will I not utterly take from him, nor ſuffer my faithfulneſs to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I ſworn by my holineſs, that I will not lye unto* David. *His ſeed ſhall endure for ever, and his throne as the ſun before me. It ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witneſs in heaven.*

One needs only read over the *Pſalms* which I have now taken notice of, and which are almoſt all applyed by the *Jews* to the Meſſiah, to ſee the great number of oracles which God gave in *David*'s time, concerning this matter; not to ſpeak of thoſe which deſcribe the calling of the *Gentiles*, which fill up the book of the *Pſalms* almoſt entirely.

I come now to the proof of the ſecond article, which is to ſhew, that the oracles which *David* uttered are much clearer, and much more particular than thoſe which were given before. This I hope to prove beyond all contradiction, by conſidering two *Pſalms*, the one whereof deſcribes the prodigious humiliation of the Meſſiah, and the other deſcribes his

his advancement at the right hand of God; two of the greateſt truths declared by the Prophets, and two the moſt ſingular of all the characters which belong to the *promiſed Meſſiah*.

CHAP. XI.

Conſiderations upon the Sufferings of the MESSIAH, *and upon his glorious Aſcenſion into Heaven, foretold by* DAVID *in the* XXII *and* CX PSALMS.

IT cannot be deny'd, when one reads the XXII *Pſalm*, but that the perſon there ſpoken of, is deſcribed figuratively, as one expoſed to the ſevereſt ſufferings, from which he is afterwards delivered by the Divine aſſiſtance, and advanced to rule an empire which extends it ſelf over all the nations of the world, and afterwards univerſally adored.

I. He that ſpeaks, cries out as if God had forſaken him, and had ſtopped his ears unto his cry.

II. He deſcribes himſelf as a worm, and no man, as the reproach of men, and one deſpiſed by the people.

III. He takes notice, that thoſe who were witneſſes of his ſufferings, made a mock at them, bidding him truſt in God, that he might deliver him.

IV. He ranks his enemies amongſt the bulls of *Baſhan*, and raging lions, who (according to the prophetical way of ſpeaking) are the chief men in the nation. *Amos* IV. 1. *Ezech.* XXII. 25.

V. He joyns the dogs with them, that is, prophane perſons or the *Gentiles*.

VI. He repreſents his hands and his feet as peirced with nails.

VII. He ſhews that he was ſtretched out before, in ſuch a manner that they might count all his bones; this expreſſes the idea of a man faſtned to a croſs, and expoſed to the view of all the world; as he afterwards deſcribes himſelf to be quite dry'd up, from the loſs of blood when he was crucify'd.

VIII. He takes notice of their parting his garments, and

IX. Of their caſting lots upon his veſture.

In ſhort, one ſee's throughout all the expreſſions of this *Pſalm* the image of a death which was equally ſhameful and cruel.

The other part of the *Pſalm* gives us an account of the deliverance of that perſon who is mentioned in this holy hymn.

I. He obliges himſelf, to praiſe the name of the Lord in the moſt numerous aſſembly.

II. He obſerves it as an effect of this deliverance, that all the ends of the world ſhould remember, and turn unto the Lord, and that all the kindreds of the nations ſhould worſhip before him.

III. At laſt, he takes notice that the kingdom of God ſhould ſpread it ſelf over all the nations of the world.

One may judge by the hiſtory of *David*, whether this *Pſalm* is applicable to him; therein we may ſee all the croſſes which he underwent particularly repreſented, during all the former years of his reign. But there we have no account, that *David* ever ſuffered any thing like that which is ſo exactly deſcribed in this *Pſalm*. And this may be ſaid further, that when *David* took any occaſion to paint out his ſufferings to us, he has put in ſeveral ſtroaks which only relate to the Meſſiah, and which ſhew us in a very lively manner, that he was to paſs through much greater tryals than any of thoſe from which *David* had been delivered.

The later *Jews*, who endeavour to verifie this prophecy in *Eſther* or *Mordecai*, agree with us at the bottom, that *David* carried his views further than barely his own ſufferings. And thoſe alſo who apply it to the people of *Iſrael*, muſt acknowledge the ſame truth even againſt their wills.

But the more ancient *Jews* were more equitable in their applications of the XXII *Pſalm* to the Meſſiah. They applyed it to him in earneſt, even after the time of Jeſus Chriſt, when the compariſon of theſe characters of the Meſſiah, which may be found ſo exactly in the death of Jeſus Chriſt, led them to an oppoſition of this truth.

And certainly there needs very little equity to acknowledge that this oracle, or rather this heap of oracles belong'd to the Meſſiah, by the confeſſion and agreement of the *Jews* in our Saviour's time.

I. They had not then reſolved to make their advantages of the writer's fault, who writ [כארי] *like a lion*, inſtead of [כארו] *they have pierced* my feet, as they have done ſince. In ſhort, *Aquila* who lived 100 years after Jeſus Chriſt, and the other *Jewiſh* interpreters, *Symmachus* and *Theodotion*, tranſlated that paſſage as we now read *it*.

II. The notion which the Synagogue always had of the ſufferings of the Meſſiah, obliged them to ſuppoſe two Meſſiah's, one ſuffering, and the other glorious, rather than to contradict that truth openly, which is expreſſed by theſe oracles in ſo particular a manner.

III. Nothing can be imagined to be more ridiculous, than to ſuppoſe that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould quote the firſt words of this *Pſalm* upon the croſs, thereby to engage all mankind to take notice of the accompliſhment of this ancient oracle in all his ſufferings, if we ſuppoſe that this *Pſalm* even, by the confeſſion of the *Jews*, had no relation to the Meſſiah.

The ſame reflexion may be made concerning the Apoſtles, who have quoted ſo many paſſages of this *Pſalm* to prove that Jeſus Chriſt was the Meſſiah; becauſe one may find in his death, and in the circumſtances of it, ſuch a literal and exact accompliſhment of this ancient prophecy.

But if it ſhould be objected, that after all, this agreement of the Synagogue can make no more than a ſtrong prejudice; this may be eaſily anſwered; by conſidering that when the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks of the extent of his kingdom over the whole earth, it was that circumſtance which determined the Synagogue in their application of this whole *Pſalm* to the Meſſiah; becauſe as the *Jews* themſelves acknowledge, this extent of

empire

empire is one of thoſe characters, which according to the ancient oracles, is applicable to none but the Meſſiah. In ſhort, (becauſe it is of great importance, I ſhall repeat it here again) common ſenſe led thoſe who conſidered theſe ancient oracles, to compare them (as naturally they ought) with thoſe that went before, and to determine the ſcope and intent of the later ones by the relation which they had to the precedent ones; and there was only need of one conſiderable clauſe to make a certain determination after they had made ſuch a compariſon. This the *Jews* were certainly convinced of, when they acknowledged that the laſt words of *David*, II *Sam.* XXIII. 1——8. were to be applyed to the Meſſiah, by comparing them with *Balaam*'s oracle of the Meſſiah, *Numb.* XXIV.

We may therefore take it for granted, that *David* did not abſolutely ſpeak of himſelf in the XXII *Pſalm*, and that he carried his views as far as the Meſſiah, that he gave a great number of characters to his poſterity, whereby they might diſtinguiſh, notwithſtanding the greatneſs of his ſufferings, and even the better by his very ſufferings, than which no clearer marks can poſſibly be given; becauſe there is nothing more involuntary than enduring of miſeries, nor nothing which depends leſs upon the choice of the perſon who is to undergo them, than the particular kind of puniſhment, or than the circumſtances which muſt accompany his death, when it is once left to the unjuſt power of violent enemies.

We come now to the CX *Pſalm*, which in a very few words contains ſeveral very important characters of the Meſſiah, which are very diſtinctly expreſſed.

If one conſiders it exactly, it ſeems to have been compoſed after that *Nathan* had acquainted *David* with the glory of his ſon which God had promiſed him; ſuch a ſon who ſhould build a houſe wherein God ſhould dwell for ever, and who ſhould ſit upon a throne which ſhould never be overturned; whereas *David* had only form'd a deſign of building a temple to the Lord.

In ſhort, one ſee's that the ſpirit of propheſy had given him a view of the glory of this auguſt king who ſhould be born of his ſeed, and of the glory of his kingdom which ſhould never be deſtroy'd. *David* advances this king not only above all MEN, by calling him *his Lord* who was himſelf a king; but alſo above the angels, by making him ſit at the right hand of God in the kingdom of heaven. This is perſonal. He alſo deſcribes the glory of his office, by conſidering him as a prieſt of a higher order than that of *Aaron*, from whom *Melchiſedech* received tithes in the perſon of *Abraham:* and, in a word, he acquaints us with the progreſs of his kingdom, and the greatneſs of his victories. Let us examine all theſe characters by themſelves.

I. He brings in God ſpeaking to the Meſſiah, whom he calls *his Lord*: *Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footſtool.* This points out to us, 1. That the Meſſiah ought to be advanced to glory. 2. That God intended to ſubdue his enemies by little and little, whilſt the Meſſiah ſhould be in his glory; as it was foretold in the ſecond *Pſalm*.

II. He obſerves, That the empire of the Meſſiah was to begin at *Jeruſalem*, or *Sion*, which was then to be under the power of his enemies.

III. He expreſly points out the quick extent of the kingdom of the Meſſiah, with the character of thoſe who ſhould ſubmit to him without conſtraint or violence, which was much practiſed under *Moſes*'s law.

IV. He poſitively aſſerts, That the Meſſiah ſhould be eſtabliſhed a *Prieſt after the order of* Melchiſedech, which would overturn the whole Levitical prieſthood, which then was to have an end: yet the very ſame king who deſigned the draught of the temple which *Solomon* built ſome time after, undermines the foundations of this material building, and clearly ſuppoſes that the Levitical miniſtry, which was fixed to *Solomon*'s temple, ſhould laſt no longer than until the coming of the Meſſiah.

V. He particularly takes notice, that the Meſſiah ſhould, by the Divine aſſiſtance, deſtroy all that ſhould oppoſe his power, and ſhould bring all things under his dominion, as a conquerour who ſhould overturn all things with the utmoſt violence.

Nothing can be greater than theſe ſeveral oracles; nothing can be more particular than his deſcription of the glory to which the Meſſiah was to be advanced after that prodigious humiliation which is deſcribed in the XXII *Pſalm*; but what can we ſuppoſe to be the reaſon of *David*'s ſpeaking of the Meſſiah in this *Pſalm*? This I am further to conſider.

One may ſay that the *Jews* did not conſtantly apply theſe prophecies to the Meſſiah, before the coming of Jeſus Chriſt without good grounds: they could not apply them to any of *David*'s ſucceſſors; none of *David*'s ſucceſſors was both king and prieſt. *Uzziah* was the only man who dared to uſurp the prieſthood; and he was puniſhed by God himſelf. The *Maccabees* were not of *David*'s tribe, but were *Levites*, and none of them ever went up into heaven to ſet at the right hand of God. Beſides, their kingdom did not begin in *Sion*, and they never brought any other kings under their authority. They applyed it therefore to the Meſſiah, purſuant to the maxim which they drew from a frequent meditation upon the ancient oracles, that we ought only to look for an accompliſhment of thoſe prophecies in the perſon of the Meſſiah, which they could never find to be fulfilled any where elſe, when at the ſame time they knew that the exactneſs and truth of thoſe predictions could not be any ways conteſted.

In ſhort, it plainly appears that they did unanimouſly apply it to the Meſſiah before *Jeſus Chriſt* came into the world, from the manner of their confeſſing it to our Saviour, when he preſſed them with the CX *Pſalm*; tho' they could not explain the manner how *David* ſhould call the Meſſiah Lord, when they allow'd him to be his ſon, *Matth.* XXII. 48.

One ſee's nothing ſo frequently urg'd by the Apoſtles as this CX *Pſalm*: they uſe it upon all occaſions to prove that Jeſus Chriſt had the characters of the true Meſſiah, ſuch as *David* had given him in the CX *Pſalm*, ſuppoſing ſtill, as a thing beyond diſpute, that *David* ſpoke of the Meſſiah in this famous prophecy.

So that what evaſions ſoever the *Jews* may endeavour to make uſe of, yet they cannot deny but that their moſt famous Doctors ſince Jeſus Chriſt, have upon ſeveral occaſions follow'd the old notions of the Synagogue in this matter. One finds in their writings great numbers of teſtimonies

teſtimonies which confirm this truth. I ſhall not mention them at preſent, becauſe they are well enough known, and becauſe I would make haſte to come to that new degree of revelations which God gave to thoſe Prophets who gave new characters of the Meſſiah to the Jewiſh nation for ſome ages after *David*'s time.

They are in too great a number to be ſpoken of, one by one, and I am forced to range them under certain heads; tho' I intend at the ſame time to make more particular reflexions upon ſome of thoſe which give us an account of the moſt remarkable truths, and ſo by that means furniſh us with the moſt ſenſible character whereby we may know more certainly the perſon whom God propoſed to his people in ſuch a manner as the Saviour of *Iſrael*, and whom he had before called *The Expectation of the Gentiles*.

CHAP. XII.

That the Messiah *was to have a Forerunner, and what was to be his Character.*

WE ſhall make it manifeſt in the ſequel of the diſcourſe, that the Meſſiah was to appear in a very deſpicable ſtate, and conſequently that his appearance would be very diſtaſtful to thoſe who expected him in the ſplendour of a great king and conqueror. To oppoſe this preconceived opinion of theirs, the Divine Wiſdom thought fit to appoint one to be his forerunner, who ſhould call the *Jews* to repentance, and a reformation of their lives, and form in them a true notion of the miniſtry of the Meſſiah, as of a perſon who was to preſcribe to them laws of the greateſt purity and holineſs. And indeed, in examining the holy Scriptures, we find, that the appearance of the Meſſiah was to be uſher'd in by a perſon thus diſtinguiſh'd; the following prophecies are very expreſs to this purpoſe.

The firſt of theſe we find in the XL of *Iſaiah*, *verſe* 3. where the Prophet ſpeaks thus, before the deſtruction of the firſt temple; *The voice of him that crieth in the wilderneſs, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make ſtraight in the deſert a highway for our God* (*a*). The *Jews* acknowledge that this chapter ſpeaks of the comfort the Meſſiah was to procure for his people, and that the voice mention'd here refers to thoſe who were to declare and proclaim his coming (*b*).

We meet with a ſecond prophecy in *Malachy*, who prophecied after the rebuilding of the temple, and who having ſhut up the viſion, preciſely points at the time wherein he was to appear, *viz.* during the ſecond temple, *Chap.* III. *verſe* 1, 2, 3, & 4. *Behold, I will ſend my meſſenger, and he ſhall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye ſeek ſhall ſuddainly come to his temple; even the meſſenger of the covenant whom ye delight in,*

(*a*) Iſai. xl. 3. (*b*) *Abenezra.*

in, behold he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiners fire, and like fullers sope. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purifie the sons of Levi, *and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.*

The *Jews* own that these words also of *Malachy*, speak of the forerunner of the Messias (*c*).

But we ought to observe in the foregoing passages, 1. That they have a manifest relation to the time of the Messiah's coming; should the *Jews* deny this (as indeed they unanimously acknowledge it) it would be an easie matter to convince them, 1. By urging the authority of the Evangelists, who apply these very passages to the ministry of *John the Baptist*. Thus we find that St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark* make a manifest allusion to these two prophecies (*d*): *Zachary* also, the father of *John the Baptist*, applyes that of *Isaiah* to his son; and his authority is the more considerable, because he was a priest. 2. By an attentive considering the passages themselves. 3. By the common consent of the *Jewish* church, who by a generally received and undoubted tradition, that *Elijah* the *Tishbite* (the *Septuagint* in their translation of that place of *Malachy* telling us as much) was to be the forerunner of the Messiah; and we find, that in the time of our Saviour, the multitude and his Disciples supposed the same thing: and the *Jews* at this day have the same perswasion, *viz.* That *Elias* is to come before the appearance of the Messiah; from which tradition of the *Jews* the *Christians* of old did, and many at this day do believe, that *Elias* shall resume the functions of his ministry before the last coming of Jesus Christ *to judge the quick and the dead.*

2. We may observe, That the character of the forerunner of the Messiah, being that which the *Jews* had much in their eye, it was needful for it to be as notable and extraordinary, as was that of the Prophet *Elias*; whose ministry was without dispute the most remarkable and illustrious of all the Prophets since *Moses*; which gave the Prophet *Malachy* occasion to call him *Elias*, much upon a like account as the Prophet *Ezekiel* calls the Messiah, *David* (*e*).

But above all things, we must carefully observe the several marks the Prophets give us of this forerunner.

The Prophet *Isaiah* gives us these following particulars: 1. That his ministry was to be very signal, and attended with general respect and veneration. 2. That he was to preach in the wilderness. 3. That he was to call sinners to repentance. 4. That he was to confound those who were most eminent in authority, and to comfort the poor and humble. 5. That he was immediately to precede the Messiah. 6. That his ministry was to usher in that grand revelation of the glory of God in the presence of all flesh, *i. e.* before all nations of the earth, who were to be called by the Messiah to his religion, according to the express declaration of the Prophets.

The Prophet *Malachy* doth most distinctly represent to us, 1. That the mission of this forerunner was not far off. *Behold*, saith he, *I send my messenger*. He speaks of it as of a thing at the door. Now it is evident,

(*c*) *R. Saad.* (*d*) Matth. iii. 1. Mark i. 2.
(*e*) Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24.

evident, and the *Jews* themſelves own it, that from the time of *Malachy*, there was never a Prophet till the appearance of *John the Baptiſt*.

2. It tells us that this *Elias* was to call ſinners to repentance, and *to prepare the way before the face of the Lord*.

3. That he was immediately to precede the Meſſias; this he expreſſes by ſaying, *And the Lord whom ye ſeek ſhall ſuddainly come to his temple, even the Angel of the covenant whom ye delight in*. It is evident that he ſpeaks here of the Meſſiah, whom he calls, not only *the Angel or Meſſenger of the covenant*, but alſo *the Lord*; (*f*) *the Lord*, foraſmuch as God had promiſed him as a king to the houſe of *David*; and *the Angel of the covenant*, becauſe God by him was to make a new covenant with the nations of the earth, as *Jeremy* declares *Chap.* XXXI.

CHAP. XIII.

That the Messiah *was to be born before the Deſſolution of the Jewiſh State, and the Deſtruction of the ſecond Temple.*

THE preceding mark of the Meſſiah, leads us to this we are now to ſpeak of, and affords it conſiderable light. I will not repeat here what I have already ſet down concerning that prophecy, *Gen.* XLIX. *verſe* 10. concerning the time when our Saviour was to appear in the world: it is evident at firſt ſight, That that prophecy evinces three things: 1. That the *ſcepter* was to be in the houſe of *Judah*, before ever the *Shiloh* was to come. 2. That the *ſcepter* was to give way to an inferiour dignity, which the Prophet ſets forth by the word *lawgiver*; and which did take place till the time of *Zerubbabel*, and his ſucceſſors. 3. There was a neceſſity that this laſt dignity alſo was to come to an end, which happened not till the advancement of *Herod* the Great to the throne of *Judea*. And it is eaſie to confirm this truth, by other oracles which give a further light to this our explication.

We have ſeveral that are very remarkable upon this account: the firſt is that of *Daniel*, *Chap.* II. *verſe* 40, 41, 42, *to* 46. where he firſt takes notice of the ſucceſſion of ſeveral monarchies, until that of the Meſſiah. 2. The time in which the Meſſiah was to appear. I confeſs he do's not determine the time very preciſely, mentioning only the monarchy during which he was to be manifeſted; but to make amends for this, when he comes to explain the particulars of this prophecy, which before he had propos'd in general terms, he doth not only point at the time of his appearance, but the very year of his death, and he do's it with that exactneſs, that it is impoſſible to be miſtaken about it.

See what he ſaith in the IX *Chapter* of his *Revelations*, *verſe* 24, 25, 26, 27. *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finiſh the tranſgreſſion, and to make an end of ſins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs, and to ſeal up the*

(*f*) Pſalm ii.

the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Verse 25. *Know therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build* Jerusalem, *unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks, the streets shall be built again, and the wall even in troublous times.* Verse 26. *And after the threescore and two weeks shall* MESSIAH *be cut off, but not for himself. And the people of the Prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.* Verse 27. *And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and for the over-spreading abomination, he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured on the desolate.*

For the understanding of this prophecy which is so exact, and all the events it refers to, so particularized, it is to be observed:

1. That by the weeks *Daniel* here speaks of, seven years are designed, according to the stile of the law, *Levit.* XXV. 8. when it speaks of the year of jubilee; so that seventy weeks make out 490 years which is acknowledged by the most learned amongst the *Jews*, *Jachiades*, *Abarbanel*, and *Manasseh Ben Israel*.

2. That the Prophet writing in *Chaldea*, followed the account of the *Chaldean* year, which consists of 360 days, as appears clearly from other passages of this book, where he resolves the years into days, without regarding the several days which in a just calculation were to be intercalated.

3. That the Prophet expresses a certain *epocha*, from whence the counting of these weeks is to begin, *viz.* an order to rebuild the temple, which cannot be applyed to that of *Cyrus*, which was in a manner of none effect; nor to the edict of *Darius* son of *Hystaspes*, which had regard only to the re-establishing of the temple; nor to that of *Artaxerxes* given to *Ezra*, in the seventh year of the reign of that prince, because that contained only some particular priviledges for the ministers of the temple: but to the edict which *Artaxerxes* granted to *Nehemiah* in the twentieth year of his reign, which contains a particular grant, to rebuild the temple with its fortifications.

4. That God very distinctly marks that the last week was not to be immediately joyned with the sixty nine weeks, by saying, that the Messiah was to be cut off after the term of seven weeks, and sixty two weeks expired, instead of saying that he should be cut off in the seventieth week.

5. That according to this calculation, we find these three parts of this prophesie exactly accomplished. The first which contains their building of the city was performed before the end of the seven weeks. The second concerning the cutting off of the Messiah, has been likewise fulfilled after the sixty ninth week; Jesus Christ appearing in the 483 year, after the twentieth of *Artaxerxes*, and being crucified the nineteenth of *Tiberius*.

As for the last week it is distinguished by three characters God hath given it, because it was to be separated from the sixty ninth week by a considerable interval, but yet was never a whit the less exactly accomplished. The first character is, that the people of the prince was to make

peace

peace with many, which agrees with the peace the *Romans* made with the *Parthians*, of which *Tacitus* makes mention *Annal lib.* 15. which peace was concluded juſt ſeven years before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. The ſecond is the ceaſing of the daily ſacrifice, which happened three years and a half after the peace made with the *Parthians*, as *Joſephus* hath obſerved. The third is the deſtruction of the *Jews*, which arrived exactly three years and a half after the ceaſing of the daily ſacrifice, and ſeven years after the ſaid peace made with the *Parthians*.

I know that ſome famous men begin the weeks of *Daniel*, from the ſecond year of *Darius Nothus*, and make them to end with the deſtruction of the *Jews*, which happened in the year 490, accounting from the ſecond year of the ſaid *Darius*; and they conceive themſelves oblig'd thereto, by an argument, they believe invincible, becauſe from the ſecond year of *Darius Nothus* to the thirty ſecond of *Artaxerxes Mnemon*, they find juſt forty nine years, that is the ſeven weeks deſigned by *Daniel* for rebuilding of the ruins, and fortifying of the city; and the rather becauſe *Nehemiah* returned to *Artaxerxes* in the thirty ſecond year of his reign, having finiſhed that work, *Nehemiah* XIII. 6.

But this opinion cannot ſtand, for two reaſons, which ſeem to be deciſive: the firſt is becauſe they joyn that which God hath ſeparated, *viz.* the death of the Meſſiah with the laſt week, which ends at the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. The ſecond is that without thinking of it they deprive Jeſus Chriſt of the glory, of having determined the time of the deſtruction of the *Jews*, as if inſtead of a propheſie about this event, Jeſus Chriſt had onely given the world an explication of a former propheſie.

Now theſe obſervations being ſuppoſed, as indeed they are matters of the greateſt evidence, it neceſſarily follows, that the Meſſiah was to appear before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* by the *Romans*. The ſame is ſet down ſo preciſely by *Daniel*, as leaves no pretence to doubt of this truth. And indeed, tho' the *Jews* ſeem after the time of our Saviour, to have adopted the opinion I mentioned before, and therefore carried the appearing of the Meſſiah to the end of the ſeventy weeks, *viz.* to the deſtruction of their temple, notwithſtanding *Daniel* expreſly tells us, that the *Jews* were not to be deſtroyed till after the cuting off of the Meſſiah; the *Jews* I ſay, being convinc'd by the force of this argument, have owned that the Meſſiah was born about the time of the deſtruction of the ſecond temple, but that he hath hid himſelf ever ſince.

The ſecond oracle concerning the time of the coming of the Meſſiah, is, that of *Haggai*, which expreſly tells us, that the Meſſiah was to appear during the ſecond temple, which was begun to be built by the order of *Cyrus*, finiſhed under *Darius* ſon of *Hyſtaſpes*, and deſtroyed by *Veſpaſian*. The words of the Prophet are as follows, *Chap.* II. *verſ.* 7, 8, 9. *And I will ſhake all nations, and the deſire of all nations ſhall come; and I will fill this houſe with glory, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts. The ſilver is mine, and the gold is mine, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts. The glory of this latter houſe ſhall be greater than that of the former ſaith the Lord of Hoſts: and in this place will I give peace, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.* It is worth our noting, 1. That this oracle promiſes a very great change. 2. It deſcribes the Meſſiah as the expectation of the *Gentiles*, ſuitable to the idea God had given of him to *Abraham*. 3. That it fixes the coming of the Meſ-

ſiah

ſiah to the time of the ſecond houſe, that is to ſay, of the temple built by *Zorobabel*. 4. It makes the glory of that houſe to depend upon its being honoured with the preſence of the Meſſiah.

In ſhort, if we would be convinc'd of this truth, we need only conſider three things: the firſt is, That the Prophets *Zechariah* and *Malachy* do repreſent to us the coming of the Meſſiah as near at hand; *Balaam* had ſaid, almoſt ten ages before, *I ſee him, but not nigh*, which intimated his coming to be then at a great diſtance. But *Zechariah* ſpeaks thus concerning it, *Chap.* III. *verſ.* 8, 9, 10. *Hear now O* Joſhuah *the high prieſt, thou and thy fellows that ſit before thee, for they are men wondred at: behold, I will bring forth my ſervant the* BRANCH; *for behold, the ſtone that I have laid before* Joſhua; *upon one ſtone ſhall be ſeven eyes; behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. In that day ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, ſhall ye call every man his neighbour, under the vine and under the figtree.*

Malachy expreſſes himſelf, concerning the approaching coming of the Meſſiah, thus, (*Chap.* III. *verſe* 1.) *Behold, I will ſend my meſſenger, and he ſhall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye ſeek, ſhall ſuddenly come to his temple, even the meſſenger of the covenant whom ye delight in, behold he ſhall come ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.*

One ought to obſerve two very conſiderable things in this Prophecy: the firſt, That the Meſſiah was to come ſuddainly. The ſecond, That *Malachy* expreſſly points to us, that the appearing of the Meſſiah was to be during the ſecond temple; the words of the prophecy diſtinctly expreſſing it.

And ſure it is, that all who gave any credit to theſe oracles, did underſtand them ſo.

The firſt, both *Jews* and *Gentiles* looked for the Meſſiah during the ſecond temple. We find a paſſage expreſs to the purpoſe in *Tacitus*; and it was on this ground that *Joſephus* gave the title of *Meſſiah* to *Veſpaſian*.

2. They expected him at the end of the ſeventy weeks, which was the third year after the death of Jeſus Chriſt. This was the occaſion of their being deluded by ſo many falſe Meſſiah's about the time of our Saviour, and a little after.

3. They never deſpair'd of his coming (taking the promiſe of the Meſſiah's coming to be conditional, when as indeed it was abſolute) until they began to believe that the term ſet down by God himſelf was expired.

4. The reaſon of their curſing thoſe that compute the times ſet down ſo diſtinctly and preciſely by *Daniel*, was, becauſe they found themſelves diſappointed in his calculation, finding that the time which *Daniel* had pointed at for the coming of the Meſſiah, ſeem'd to be already expired.

5. 'Tis but of late that they have try'd to evade it, by maintaining that the temple will be built a third time, and that then the Meſſiah ſhall appear; but this evaſion is unanſwerably refuted; 1. Becauſe *Daniel* aſſigns a certain term which is expired 1600 years ſince. 2. Becauſe he expreſſly tells us, That the deſolation of the temple was to be for ever, as

will

will appear in the following chapters. And 3dly, Becauſe *Haggai* in effect calls the temple of which he ſpeaks, *The ſecond or third houſe*, by which expreſſion he ſo diſtinctly points out the ſecond temple to us, that it would be ridiculous to ſuppoſe it meant of a third temple, to be built 1700 years after the ruin of that of which he prophecied.

CHAP. XIV.

That the Meſſiah was to be born of a Virgin of the Houſe of David.

HITHERTO we have ſeen that the Meſſiah was to be born of the poſterity of *Abraham* by *Iſaac*, of that of *Iſaac* by *Jacob*, and of that of *Jacob* by *Juda*. This hath been ſufficiently made out already.

I have alſo ſhew'd from the oracle in the I *Sam. Chap.* VII. That he was to be born of the poſterity of *David*; and we find the ſame very particularly and fully ſet down in the LXXXIX *Pſalm.*

The following prophets have expreſt themſelves to the ſame purpoſe; *Iſaiah* XI. *verſ.* 1, 2, 3. and the prophet *Jeremy* hath purſued the ſame idea's, *Chap.* XXIII. *verſ.* 5, 6. and *Chap.* XXXIII. *verſ.* 15, 16, 17.

Neither do the prophets only diſtinguiſh the Meſſiah by his being born of a virgin, but alſo by determining that virgin to the Houſe of *David*. Neither need I repeat here what I have already obſerv'd, That this is a truth, the grounds whereof God had laid down in his firſt promiſe, *viz. The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the ſerpents head:* where he makes mention of the ſeed of the woman only, without naming that of the man, the word of *ſeed* or *poſterity* very evidently deſigning a man to be born of the woman, which is acknowledg'd by the *Jews* in another prophecy, and the ſame which the apoſtle St. *Paul* (*e*) takes notice of as a maxim generally owned by the doctors of the ſynagogue. It is alſo evident that the word *woman* plainly denotes the ſex of which this perſon was immediately to be born.

It was obvious to judge, That ſomething miraculous was to attend the birth of the Meſſiah. We ſee *Iſaac* born of a barren mother, paſt the age of child-bearing: We find alſo ſomething very ſingular at the birth of *Sampſon* and *Samuel*; and 'tis well known that the promiſe of the Meſſiah was ſomething far greater than the birth of theſe now mentioned, how illuſtrious ſoever they might be; and that therefore probably his birth was to be attended by a greater miracle. But becauſe this was a thing wholly new, we ought to obſerve in what manner God did particularly foretel it.

The prophecy of *Iſaiah* expreſſeth it thus, *Chap.* VII. *verſ.* 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. *Moreover the Lord ſpake again unto* Ahaz, *ſaying, Ask thee a ſign of the Lord thy God, aſk it either in the depth, or in the height above.*

above. But Ahaz *said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord. And he said, hear ye now, O house of* David, *is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name* Immanuel. *Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good: for before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings. The Lord shall bring upon thee, upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come from the day that* Ephraim *departed from* Juda, *even the king of* Assyria. Where we may observe,

1. That the promise here is made to a wicked king, but of the family of *David*, to whom the prophet particularly addresses himself.

2. That this prophecy was given at a juncture of time very capable of awakening their attention to it, at a time when the state of the *Jews* was reduced to the greatest extremity, and the house of *David* in particular in a very great consternation.

3. The prophecy was utter'd by a very illustrious prophet, who was of the royal family.

4. It was sealed and confirmed with the prediction of the birth of a child, which came to pass accordingly.

5. It is set forth as a very extraordinary sign, instead of that which the wicked King refused to ask, when *Isaiah* offer'd it him, in the name of God.

I am not ignorant that the modern *Jews* deny that this character of being born of a virgin belongs to the Messiah: but it is an easie matter to confute them.

For first, Would it not have been ridiculous for the apostles to go about to apply this oracle to their Messiah, if it had not been a thing universally own'd by the *Jews*, that this was the meaning of *Isaiah*'s prophecy? Is it not evident that this character, so difficult to gain belief, would rather perplex than strengthen their proofs. And yet certain it is that St. *Matthew* has done so, *Chap.* I. *verse* 23. as likewise St. *Luke*, *Chap.* I. *verse* 31.

Justin Martyr observ'd, That the notion of this oracle, as we understand it, hath been entertain'd amongst the heathens, who built their fable of *Perseus* upon it, whom they pretend to have been born of a virgin.

3. It appears that all those laws which I mentioned in my reflexions upon *Exodus*, and the following book, *Chap.* XX. and which have relation to the distinct knowledge of the state of virginity, receive much light from this notion; and are without it altogether useless.

4. 'Tis evident that the *Jews* did not dispute this character, till after they saw that the christians apply'd it to Jesus Christ; and thereupon have fallen upon such childish fancies as may justly cover them with confusion.

But we shall be yet further satisfied hereof, if we add to all these just prejudices, only the following reflexions on the terms the prophet makes use of.

The first is, That the LXX interpreters have in translating this pro-

phecy, made uſe of a word that ſignifies a virgin, and not a young woman, as the *Jews* have underſtood it ſince our Saviour's time. The firſt who rejected the interpretation of the *Septuagint* was *Symmachus* (*f*), who lived in the ſecond century, as it is obſerved by *Juſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian*, who for this reaſon accuſe the *Jews* of having falſified the holy ſcripture.

The ſecond is, That the *Hebrew* word expreſsly ſignifies ſuch an one, as according to the law of virgins, was kept under lock and key from the eyes of men, according to the cuſtom of the eaſtern nations, and eſpecially of the *Jews*, which continues amongſt them till this day.

The third is, That this word hath been taken by the *Africans* in the ſame ſignification, as St. *Jerome* obſerves.

The fourth is, That the prophet doth ſet forth this child-bearing as a prodigy and miracle altogether unheard of, and as a particular character, by which the houſe of *David* was to be ſtrongly confirmed in the hope of ſeeing the accompliſhment of the promiſe which God had made of ſetling an eternal kingdom upon it, which could not be accompliſhed but by means of the Meſſiah.

The fifth is, That tho' ſome *Jews* have applyed this prophecy to king *Hezekiah* (*g*), which yet to others of them ſeems very ridiculous, he being nine years of age when the prophecy was uttered by *Iſaiah*, and themſelves never making uſe of this evaſion, except in their diſputes againſt the chriſtians, and ſo on this occaſion have dropt a confeſſion which alone was ſufficient to confound them. Yet it hath been a thing ſo generally received amongſt them, That this prophecy did reſpect the Meſſiah, that after they had applyed it to *Hezekiah*, one of their moſt famous doctors concludes (*h*), That they ought to look for no Meſſiah, ſince the time of *Hezekiah*, that prophecy having had its accompliſhment in him; an opinion which thoſe that ſucceeded him have rejected with the greateſt abhorrence.

The ſixth is, That the title of *Immanuel*, given to this ſon, whoſe birth is here promiſed, is repreſented to us *Chap.* VIII. as the name of him who was lord of the land, which is a true repreſentation of the heir promiſed to *David*, to whom *David* ſaid, *O God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladneſs above thy fellows.* Pſal. XLV. 7, 8.

The ſeventh is, That the prophet *Iſaiah* having alledged and cited two witneſſes, *Uriah* the ſon of *Shemaiah*, a prophet, who was put to death by *Jehoiakim*, and *Zechariah* the ſon of *Jeberechiah*; the former of which lived long after *Ahaz*, and the latter ſince the captivity, under *Darius* king of *Perſia*, according to the account the *Jews* themſelves give of them, he ſufficiently hints by this circumſtance, That the prophecy concerning the birth of the *Immanuel* he ſpeaks of, was to be fulfill'd many ages after, and not in that age wherein he prophecies.

(*f*) In dialog. cum *Tryphon. Tertull.* cont. *Jud.* cap. 9.
(*g*) *Raſchi* in. h. l.
(*h*) *Gemar* in *Sanhed.* Cap. Chelech.

CHAP. XV.

That the Meſſiah was to be born at Bethlehem *of the Family of* David, *which at that Time was reduc'd to a private State.*

GOD had not only pointed out the time in which the Meſſiah was to appear, with the miraculous manner and circumſtances of his birth; but he had alſo named the family, the place, with the ſtate and condition of the family in which he was to be born, as a triple character by which he might be known.

I ſay, firſt, That according to the divine oracles, the Meſſiah was to be born of the family of *David*, as will appear if we conſider the following oracles.

1. God expreſly promiſeth as much to *David*, II *Sam. Chap.* VII. a place I have quoted before, which proves that the Meſſiah was to be born of the family of *David*.

2. It appeareth that *David* believ'd this himſelf, from *Pſalm* CXXXII. *verſ.* 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, *and* 18. *The Lord hath ſworn in truth unto* David, *he will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body will I ſet upon thy throne.* And after having ſaid, *Verſe* 12. *That if his children would keep his covenant*, that *their children alſo ſhould ſit upon his throne for evermore.* And this *becauſe* (Verſ. 13 & 14.) *the Lord had choſen Zion, and deſired it for his habitation, &c.* and promiſed *verſe* 15. That he would *abundantly bleſs her proviſion, and ſatisfie her poor with bread*; that he would *verſe* 16. *Clothe her prieſts with ſalvation, and make her ſaints ſhout for joy.* He ſubjoyns *verſ.* 17 & 18. *There I will make the horn of* David *to bud, I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed. His enemies I will clothe with ſhame, but upon himſelf ſhall his crown flouriſh.* It is very evident, That by this *horn of* David is to be meant a king, the Meſſiah, whom he diſtinguiſhes by that expreſſion from all the reſt of *David*'s children. And *Zachariah* in his ſong of praiſe, *Luke* I. *verſe* 69. applying it to our Saviour, puts the matter out of all doubt.

3. Hence it was the prophets took occaſion to give to the Meſſiah the name of *David*. So *Ezek.* XXXIV. *verſ.* 23, 24. *And I will ſet up one ſhepherd over them, and he ſhall feed them, even my ſervant* David; *he ſhall feed them, and he ſhall be their ſhepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my ſervant* David *a prince among them, I the Lord have ſpoken it.*

4. The *Jews* are, and have always been firm in this perſwaſion, grounded on the foreſaid and other like places of ſcripture, which they conſtantly refer to the Meſſiah.

I ſay in the ſecond place, That the divine oracles expreſly point out *Bethlehem* for the birth-place of the Meſſiah. *Micah* the V. *verſe* 2. *But thou* Bethlehem Ephratah, *though thou be little among the thouſands of* Judah, *yet out of thee ſhall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in* Iſrael; *whoſe goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.*

The *Jews* acknowledge that this oracle ſpeaks of the Meſſiah; and indeed the prophet diſtinguiſhing by *Bethlehem* adding the word *Ephratah* (whence the family of *David* was) from that *Bethlehem* which belonged

to

to another tribe, makes it apparent that nothing could be ſpoke more diſtinctly to determine the birth-place of the Meſſiah. Beſides, we find that all the Jewiſh Rabbies and Prieſts agree in this, That the Meſſiah was to be born at *Bethlehem*, when being conſulted by *Herod* about this matter, they declared this to be their ſenſe, grounded upon the foremention'd place of *Micah*, *Matthew* II. *verſ.* 4, 5, 6.

In the third place, it appears that the Meſſiah was to be born in an abject, contemptible, and weak condition, and very different from the greatneſs of the kings of *Judah*. Indeed, ſhould we only have our eye on II *Sam. Chap.* VII. and *Pſalm* CXXXII. it would be natural enough to think the contrary; but *Micah*'s oracle ſufficiently refutes them; for how great things ſoever the Prophet there ſpeaks of the Meſſiah, whether as to his divine nature, by declaring that his *goings fourth were from the days of eternity*; or to the majeſty and glory of his empire; yet however he gives us a different idea, inducing us to conceive of him, as of one that was to be born in the ſtate of a private perſon; for why elſe is his birth determined, not to *Zion*, which was the place and ſeat of the empire of *Judah*, but to *Bethlehem*, a town where the family of *David* lived, whilſt they were private perſons, except for this cauſe, to make us conceive that the Meſſiah was not to be born in that place where the family of *David* poſſeſſed the empire: but in a condition far diſtant from the glory of kings, and in a place where the houſe of *David* was contemptible, and of very ſmall eſteem.

The ſame is hinted to us by *Iſaiah*, in his XI *Chapter*, *v.* 1. where he calls the Meſſiah *a rod*, or ſhoot *of the ſtem of* Jeſſe. Now *Jeſſe* was not king, but a private perſon. And on the ſame account it is that the Prophet deſcribes him, *Chap.* LIII. as having *no form or comlineſs*.

The Prophet *Zachary* alſo, *Chap.* IX. *verſe* 9. repreſents him, not as king, ſitting on the throne in *Zion*; but as riding to *Jeruſalem* on an aſs; and he gives him the title of *Lowly*, which ſignifies as well a mean condition, as the vertue of humility.

But in ſhort, this is very conſiderable; 1. That thoſe who acknowledged Jeſus to be the Meſſiah, thought they had the greateſt reaſon ſo to do, becauſe they acknowledged him to be the ſon of *David*.

2. That thoſe why deny'd him that title, thought themſelves ſufficiently juſtified in ſo doing, by eſteeming him a *Nazarene*; as concluding he could not be the ſon of *David*, if he were born at *Nazareth*, as they ſuppoſed.

3. The Evangeliſts preciſely tell us, That Chriſt was born at *Bethlehem*, of the lineage of *David*, reduced to a very obſcure condition; and ſo making this one of the chief characters which ſpoke him to be the Meſſiah.

CHAP. XVI.

That the Meſſiah was to work great Miracles, for the eſtabliſhing of his Miſſion, and of the Truth of his Doctrine.

HERE is another character which is very particular, and whereby the Meſſiah might be certainly known, *viz.* That he was to work great miracles for the confirmation of his miſſion and of his doctrine.

This appears, as I have already hinted, 1. From the conformity which the Meſſiah was to have with *Moſes*, in being the founder of a new religious ſociety, and in propoſing a new doctrine to men; upon which account there lay upon him the ſame obligation, as upon *Moſes*, to ſupport his authority by miracles, that even in this he might not be inferior to him.

2. One may gather this alſo from the title of *Prophet*, and *great Prophet*, which are applicable to the Meſſiah; it being difficult to conceive, That God who vouchſafed the glory of doing miracles to moſt of the Prophets, tho' they were barely ſent to foretel the coming of the Meſſiah, and to give an account of him, ſhould have denied the ſame glory and the ſame power to the Meſſiah himſelf, of whom all the Prophets were but the forerunners.

Beſides, it is eaſie to judge from the mean and contemptible ſtate wherein the Meſſiah was to appear, That this glory of doing miracles was of abſolute neceſſity to give him authority and reſpect: for ſince he was to be born in an obſcure condition, and not in royal grandeur, it is evident that the gift of miracles was needful to make him known, and counterbalance that low and opprobrious condition in which he was to appear in the world.

But this particularly appears from an expreſs oracle which God gave upon this very ſubject, in *Iſaiah* XXXV. *verſ.* 3, 4, 5, *and* 6. *Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them of a fearful heart, be ſtrong, fear not; behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and ſave you. Then the eyes of the blind ſhall be opened, and the ears of the deaf ſhall be unſtopped. Then ſhall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb ſing: for in the wilderneſs ſhall waters break out, and ſtreams in the deſert.* Which oracle very fully expreſſes the power of Miracles wherewith our Saviour was to be dignified, in curing all manner of diſeaſes, of which the Prophet hath named ſome only, to give us a *ſpecimen* of the reſt; and it ſeems as if the Prophet had choſen theſe four ſorts before all others, becauſe throughout the whole ſcripture we do not find that ever any Prophet did the like, that ſo the character of the Meſſiah might be particular in his miracles too.

It is alſo worth our noting, in giving a character of the Meſſiah, firſt, That even thoſe who rejected Jeſus Chriſt, yet did at the ſame time ſuppoſe that the Meſſiah when he came, was to work miracles. Therefore it is that we hear ſome of them ſaying to Chriſt, *What ſign doſt thou?*

and

and others maintaining that *Moſes* had wrought greater wonders than Jeſus Chriſt, in giving them bread from heaven, and feeding them miraculouſly for the ſpace of forty years; whilſt others affirm'd, That none could work greater wonders than he wrought: *when the Meſſiah ſhall come, will he do greater wonders than this man?*

Secondly, one ought to obſerve that Jeſus Chriſt alledges this oracle of the Prophet *Iſaiah*, taking it for granted that the accompliſhment thereof was moſt viſibly evident in the miracles which he wrought, as appears from the anſwer he gave to the meſſengers of *John the Baptiſt*.

Thirdly, it is alſo obſervable, That thoſe who were willing to flatter the vanity of the emperour *Veſpaſian* (whom *Joſephus* endeavoured to raiſe to a belief that he was the Meſſiah, becauſe he had been proclaimed in the eaſt, applying to that purpoſe the words of *Micah*, miſapplyed, *Chap. V. verſe 2. Whoſe goings forth are from the eaſt*) were not wanting to attribute to him the glory of doing miracles, and ſuch as *Iſaiah* aſcribes to the Meſſiah, by attributing to him the cure of one that was blind, and another that was lame at *Alexandria*. He that would know the particulars, may conſult *Tacitus* his hiſtory.

And laſt of all we ought to obſerve, That the *Jews* do not only agree that this oracle of *Iſaiah* refers to the Meſſiah; but they alſo ſtill propoſe the power of working miracles, as a character which would render the Meſſiah very illuſtrious, and certainly known.

CHAP. XVII.

That the Meſſiah was to be an illuſtrious Prophet.

THIS truth I have already aſſerted in the Reflexions I made on the prophecy of *Moſes*, *Deut.* XVIII. But one ought to explain this character of the Meſſiah more particularly, God having been pleaſed further to illuſtrate this oracle of *Moſes*.

Firſt then, we ſay that the word Meſſiah implies anointing, which was common to kings, prophets, and prieſts; and ſince *David*'s time, we find nothing more common than this title in the books of the *Old Teſtament*: where we may obſerve that *Moſes* was dignified with this gift of prophecy; and that *Samuel* communicated the ſame to *Saul* and *David*, when he anointed them to be kings. Yea, the *Jews* to this day are of opinion, that *Elias* the Prophet ſhall anoint the Meſſiah; that is, initiate him in his prophetical, as well as his royal function.

Secondly, God more preciſely ſignifies this, *Iſai.* XI. *verſ.* 1, 2, & 3. where he declares he would communicate all the neceſſary gifts of the prophetical function to the Meſſiah. *There ſhall come forth a rod out of the ſtem of* Jeſſe, *and a branch ſhall grow out of his roots. And the ſpirit of the Lord ſhall reſt upon him, the ſpirit of wiſdom and underſtanding, the ſpirit of counſel and might, the ſpirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord. So*

that he ſhall not judge after the ſight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears.

Theſe words need no commentary: for the *Jews* refer them conſtantly to the Meſſiah, and they plainly import that he was to be a great Prophet, foraſmuch as all the *characters* which are there given to the ſpirit which was to reſt on the Meſſiah, are the ſame which in the *Old Teſtament* we find attributed to the Prophets, and may eaſily be taken notice of in the hiſtory of the Prophets, eſpecially of *David* and *Solomon*.

And much to the ſame purpoſe is that paſſage *Iſai.* XLII. *verſ.* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. *Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my ſoul delighteth: I have put my ſpirit upon him, he ſhall bring forth judgment to the* Gentiles. *He ſhall not cry, nor lift up, nor cauſe his voice to be heard in the ſtreet. A bruiſed reed ſhall he not break, and the ſmoking flax ſhall he not quench; he ſhall bring forth judgment unto truth. He ſhall not fail nor be diſcouraged till he have ſet judgment in the earth, and the iſles ſhall wait for his law. Thus ſaith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and ſtretched them out; he that ſpread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it: he that giveth breath to the people upon it, and ſpirit to them that walk therein. I the Lord have called thee in righteouſneſs, and will hold thine, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the* Gentiles: *to open the blind eyes, to bring out the priſoners from the priſon, and them that ſit in darkneſs, out of the priſon houſe.* In which oracle one ought to take notice particularly of thoſe things which the *Jews* apply to the Meſſiah.

1. That God propoſes the gifts of the ſpirit, which he beſtowed upon him as an effect of his love, and the choice he had made of him.

2. That the Meſſiah was to make uſe of the ſame, as rules for reforming the country, and propounding Gods covenant to the *Gentiles*; which clearly ſuppoſe the neceſſity of the gift of prophecy to qualify him for ſuch great undertakings.

3. That contrary to the thundring character which diſtinguiſhed the reſt of the Prophets, who were as ſo many publick cenſors; the Meſſiah was to ſpeak with all meekneſs and ſweetneſs to the nations which ſhould receive his preaching.

One ſee's that *Iſaiah* repeats the ſame idea's, *Chap.* LXI. *verſ.* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. *The ſpirit of the Lord God is upon me, becauſe the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath ſent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the priſon to them that are bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn: to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for aſhes, the oyl of joy for mourning, the garment of praiſe for the ſpirit of heavineſs; that they might be called trees of righteouſneſs, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. And they ſhall build the old waſte, they ſhall raiſe up the former deſolations, and they ſhall repair the waſte cities, the deſolations of many generations. And ſtrangers ſhall ſtand and feed your flocks, and the ſons of the alien ſhall be your plowmen, and your vine dreſſers. But ye ſhall be named the prieſts of the Lord, men ſhall call you the miniſters of our God: ye ſhall eat the riches of the* Gentiles, *and in their glory ſhall ye boaſt your ſelves. For your ſhame ye ſhall have double, and for confuſion they ſhall rejoyce in their portion:*

portion: therefore in their land they ſhall poſſeſs the double; everlaſting joy ſhall be upon them.

In ſhort, he repreſents in this and the former oracle, the *Gentiles* as a people being in darkneſs, and in the miſery of a priſon; from whence we may eaſily infer, firſt, That the Meſſiah was to be a Prophet, how vile and abject ſoever that character might appear in the eyes of the world, as I have ſhewed that it was, where I ſpake of the Prophets in general. Secondly, That he was to diſcharge theſe functions during the whole courſe of his life, and that it was to be his chief employment here upon earth.

David had before ſignified, *Pſalm* XXII. *verſe* 22. that the Meſſiah was to *declare the name of God unto his brethren*, viz. the *Jews*, by exerciſing his prophetical function in *Judea*; but the holy ſpirit did ſomething more when he ſeem'd to point out *Galilee* as the place where this ſacred Doctor was chiefly to fix his abode.

This is in effect inſinuated, when God tells us that he was to begin his miniſterial functions in the tribes of *Naphtali* and *Zebulon*. *Iſai.* IX. *verſ.* 1, 2, and 3. *Nevertheleſs the dimneſs ſhall not be ſuch as was in her vexation, when at the firſt he lightly afflicted the land of* Zebulon, *and the land of* Naphtali, *and afterwards did more grievouſly afflict her by the way of the ſea, beyond* Jordan *in* Galilee *of the nations. The people that walked in darkneſs have ſeen a great light, they that dwell in the land of the ſhadow of death, upon them hath the light ſhined. Thou haſt multiplyed the nation, thou haſt encreaſed the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harveſt, and as men rejoyce when they divide the ſpoil.*

I ſhall afterwards take notice, That the time of the Meſſiah was to be diſtinguiſhed by an incredible abundance of ſpiritual gifts: and ſo this ſhall ſuffice at preſent to prove that the Meſſiah was to be a very great Prophet.

CHAP. XVIII.

That the Messiah *was to propound a new Covenant from God with all Men.*

THIS is a truth which is eaſily gathered, 1. Becauſe all nations, before they could be made partakers of the bleſſing of God by the Meſſiah (according to the promiſe made to *Abraham*) were firſt to be received into the covenant. 2. From the nature of that covenant it ſelf, of which *Moſes* was the mediator, the end of which was, to ſeparate the *Jews* from other nations, ſome of which were not capable of being received amongſt them, till after ſeveral generations, whereas they were to be made partakers of this bleſſing by the Meſſiah. 3. Becauſe in effect all the ceremonial law, was only added to the moral, as it were contrary to God's principal intention, and only upon occaſion of

the *Jews* worſhipping the *golden calf*, as St. *Paul* obſerves in the third *chapter* of his epiſtle to the *Galatians* (*i*).

Beſides, it appears that God at divers times had given ſufficient hints concerning this.

1. He had propoſed a new prieſthood of the Meſſiah, which was to aboliſh the Levitical prieſthood; and this is the more remarkable, foraſmuch as *David* who pronounced that oracle, *Pſalm* CX. was he who firſt form'd the deſign of building the temple, to which all the Levitical ſervice was annexed.

2. We find him rejecting in ſome ſort the Levitical miniſtry, after he had deſpiſed it in compariſon of the ſpiritual worſhip. *Pſalm* XL. *verſ.* 6. *Sacrifice and offering thou didſt not deſire, mine ears haſt thou opened; burnt-offering and ſin-offering haſt thou not required.* And *Pſalm* L. *verſ.* 8, 9, 10. *I will not reprove thee for thy ſacrifices, or thy burnt-offerings which have been continually before me. I will take no bullocks out of thine houſe, nor he-goats out of thy folds; for every beaſt of the foreſt is mine, and the cattel upon a thouſand hills.* And *Pſalm* LI. *verſe* 17. he tells us that *the ſacrifices of God are a broken ſpirit*; in oppoſition to the ſacrifices which the law preſcribed, and to ſignifie their imperfection; the law having appointed none for the expiation of murther or adultery.

Iſaiah follows *David*, *Chap.* I. *verſ.* 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15. *To what purpoſe is the multitude of your ſacrifices unto me ſaith the Lord? I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beaſts: and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When you come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations, incenſe is an abomination unto me, the new moons and ſabbaths, the calling of aſſemblies, I cannot away with, it is iniquity even the ſolemn meeting. Your new moons, and your appointed feaſts my ſoul hateth; they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them. And when you ſpread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea when you make many prayers, I will not hear, your hands are full of blood.* And *Jeremiah* ſpeaks much to the ſame purpoſe, *Chap.* VII. v. 21, 22, & 23.

But beſides, God directly promiſeth this new covenant by *Iſaiah*, *Chap.* XLII. *verſ.* 6, 7. *I the Lord have called thee in righteouſneſs, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the* Gentiles. *To open the blind eyes, to bring out the priſoners from the priſon, and them that ſit in darkneſs from the priſon houſe.*

It is natural to obſerve, That in this place, where God ſpeaks of the Meſſiah, as the *Jews* themſelves confeſs, he expreſly declares two things: 1. That the Meſſiah ſhould be a covenant of the people, that is, that he ſhould mediate a covenant between God and the people. 2. That the fruit of this covenant was to extend to the *Gentiles*, which plainly implyes that it was not the old covenant, foraſmuch as from it ſeveral were excluded.

The ſame covenant is alſo mention'd, *Chap.* XLIX. *verſ.* 8, 9. *Thus ſaith the Lord, in an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of ſalvation have I helped thee, and I will preſerve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to eſtabliſh the earth, to cauſe to inherit the deſolate heritages. That thou maiſt ſay to the priſoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkneſs,*

(*i*) Gal. iii. 19.

darkneſs, Shew your ſelves, they ſhall feed in the ways, and their paſtures ſhall be in all high places.

He purſues the ſame notion, *Chap.* LV. *verſ.* 3, 4. *Incline your ear and come unto me, hear and your ſoul ſhall live; and I will make an everlaſting covenant with you, the ſure mercies of* David. *Behold, I have given him for a witneſs to the people, a leader and commander to the people.* Than which, nothing can be more particular.

And to the ſame purpoſe he ſpeaks, *Chap.* LXI. *verſ.* 8, 9. *For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt-offering, and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlaſting covenant with them. And their ſeed ſhall be known among the* Gentiles, *and their off-ſpring among the people, all that ſee them ſhall acknowledge them, that they are the ſeed which the Lord hath bleſſed.*

It is as clear as the day, That God in theſe oracles promiſeth an irrevocable covenant, becauſe he calls it an *everlaſting covenant* in oppoſition to the former. He takes notice alſo in the ſame book, That the ſaid covenant was to be propounded in the midſt of the nations, and that then that bleſſing of God ſhould be known according to the ancient oracles, which was promiſed univerſally to all nations.

This is that which God more particularly explains afterwards, by the voice and pen of a Prophet who was of the order of Prieſts, thereby to prevent all ſorts of exceptions.

Jeremiah in effect ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe, *Chap.* XXXI. *verſ.* 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36. *Behold the days come, ſaith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the houſe of* Iſrael, *and with the houſe of* Judah: *not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of* Egypt (*which my covenant they brake, altho' I were a huſband to them, ſaith the Lord:*) *but this ſhall be the covenant that I will make with the houſe of* Iſrael *after thoſe days ſaith the Lord; I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their heart, and I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people. And they ſhall teach no more every man his neighbour, ſaying, Know the Lord; for they ſhall all know me from the leaſt of them unto the greateſt of them, ſaith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their ſin no more. Thus ſaith the Lord which giveth the ſun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and ſtars for a light by night, which divideth the ſea when the waves thereof roar, the Lord of Hoſts is his name. If thoſe ordinances depart from before me, ſaith the Lord, then the ſeed of* Iſrael *alſo ſhall ceaſe from being a nation before me for ever.*

Nothing can be deſired more particular than this oracle; 1. It tells us that God would make a new covenant with his people, which ſuppoſes an aboliſhing of the former. 2. That this covenant was not to be like the foregoing. 3. That the old covenant had been made vain, and had been broken by thoſe with whom it was made. 4. That this covenant was to be made *after thoſe days*, that is in the time of the Meſſiah. 5. That this new covenant was not to be engraven in tables of ſtone, but in their hearts. 6. That in the ſame covenant full remiſſion of ſin is promiſed.

The ſame thing is alſo expreſſed, *Chap.* XXXII. *verſ.* 40. *And I will make an everlaſting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them*

to

to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, and they ſhall not depart from me. And *Chap.* L. *verſ.* 5. *They ſhall aſk the way to* Zion *with their faces thitherward, ſaying, Come and let us joyn our ſelves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, that ſhall not be forgotten.*

To this purpoſe alſo *Ezechiel*, who himſelf was a Prieſt, ſpeaks of a religious worſhip extended to all nations, and of a new covenant which God was to make with them, *Chap.* XVI. *verſ.* 60, 61, 62. *Nevertheleſs I will remember my covenant with thee, in the days of thy youth, and I will eſtabliſh unto thee an everlaſting covenant. Then thou ſhalt remember thy ways, and be aſhamed when thou ſhalt receive thy ſiſters, thy elder and thy younger, and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant. And I will eſtabliſh my covenant with thee, and thou ſhalt know that I am the Lord.*

Here is firſt, a covenant differing from the former. 2. A covenant wherein other nations were to be included, clearly intimated by the *elder* and *younger ſiſters* of the ſynagogue. 3. A covenant whereby the *Gentiles* were to enjoy the ſame priviledges with the *Jews*, and be incorporated with them.

Malachy follows the ſteps of theſe Prophets, when he calls the Meſſiah *the Angel of the covenant*, Chap. III. verſ. 1. *Behold, I will ſend my meſſenger, and he ſhall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye ſeek ſhall ſuddainly come to his temple; even the meſſenger (Angel) of the covenant, whom ye delight in, behold he ſhall come ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.* I know very well that the *Jews* apply theſe words to *Elias*, whoſe miniſtry, as they pretend, was to conſiſt in leading the *Jews* to repentance. But if we read the text with attention, we ſhall find two meſſengers mentioned; the firſt who prepare the way of the Meſſiah; and the other is the Meſſiah himſelf, who is called *the Angel of the covenant*, as being ſent of God to make a new covenant with men.

CHAP. XIX.

That the JEWS, *by a dreadful Effect of their Blindneſs, were to reject the* MESSIAH.

THIS is a very peculiar mark which will guide us ſurely to the knowledge of the Meſſiah. We find the *Jews* at this day very ready to follow every one that uſurps that auguſt title, and to take him for the only true Meſſiah that was promiſed them; which is no other than what was infallibly to come to paſs.

Neither will this much ſurprize us, if we conſider, 1. That this people, on divers occaſions, have given very ſtrange inſtances of a prodigious blindneſs: we ſee them reject *Moſes*, notwithſtanding God had authoriz'd his call by great and avowed miracles. Yea, we find them rejecting *David* alſo, whom God had ſo ſignally appointed to be their king, and the father of the Meſſiah, of whom we hear theſe prophecies.

2. That

2. That God upbraids them with this blindneſs by his Prophets, as a ſin to which they were peculiarly inclin'd; as appears from *Pſalm* LXIX. *verſ.* 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28. *Let their eyes be darkned that they ſee not, and make their loins continually to ſhake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitatien be deſolate, and none dwell in their tents: for they perſecute him whom thou haſt ſmitten, and they talk to the grief of thoſe whom thou haſt wounded. Add iniquity to their iniquity; and let them not come into thy righteouſneſs. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.*

One ſee's the ſame thing in *Iſaiah*, Chap. VI. verſ. 9, 10, 11, and 12. where the Spirit of God foretells that the *Jews* ſhould ſhut their eyes againſt the moſt evident and convincing proofs imaginable. *Go*, ſaith the Lord to the Prophet, *and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but underſtand not, and ſee ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and ſhut their eyes, leſt they ſee with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and underſtand with their heart and convert, and be healed: Then ſaid I, Lord how long? And he anſwered, until the cities be waſted without inhabitant, and the houſes without man, and the land be utterly deſolate; and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forſaking in the midſt of the land.*

Nothing can be imagined more particular than this oracle concerning the *Jews* reſiſting the Prophet, which God expreſſes in terms very uſual amongſt the Prophets, as if *Iſaiah*, who was only the foreteller of their being hardned, ſhould himſelf be the cauſe of it.

The Prophet *Hoſeah* deſcribes the very ſame complaints of God againſt the *Jews* for their blindneſs and ignorance, for which he denounces their deſtruction. *Hoſ.* IV. *verſ.* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. *Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of* Iſrael, *for the Lord has a controverſie with the inhabitants of the land, becauſe there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By ſwearing, and lying, and killing, and ſtealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore ſhall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein ſhall languiſh, with the beaſts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, yea the fiſhes of the ſea alſo ſhall be taken away. Yet let no man ſtrive or reprove another; for thy people are as they that ſtrive with the Prieſt. Therefore ſhalt thou fall in the day, and the Prophet alſo ſhall fall with thee in the night, and I will deſtroy thy mother. My people are deſtroyed for lack of knowledge; becauſe thou haſt rejected knowledge I will alſo reject thee, that thou ſhalt be no Prieſt to me; ſeeing thou haſt forgotten the law of thy God, I will alſo forget thy children.*

The Prophet *Jeremy* ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe, *Chap.* V. *verſ.* 21, 22, and 23. *Hear now this, O fooliſh people, and without underſtanding, which have eyes and ſee not, which have ears and hear not. Fear ye not me, ſaith the Lord? Will ye not tremble at my preſence, who have placed the ſand for the bound of the ſea, by a perpetual decree that it cannot paſs it, and tho' the waves thereof toſs themſelves, yet can they not prevail; tho' they roar, yet can they not paſs over it? But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone.* And he reiterates the ſame, *Chap.* VIII, *verſ.* 7. *The ſtork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle*

and

and the crane and the ſwallow, obſerve the time of their coming: but my people know not the judgment of the Lord.

Ezechiel proſecutes the ſame matter, *Chap.* II. *verſ.* 5, and 8. calling the *Jews* a rebellious houſe. And *Chap.* XII. *verſ.* 1, and 2. he ſaith, *The word of the Lord came unto me ſaying, Son of man thou dwelleſt in the midſt of a rebellious houſe, who have eyes to ſee, and ſee not, they have ears to hear, and hear not, for they are a rebellious houſe.*

Neither do the Prophets only repreſent to us in general the blindneſs of the *Jews* upon ſeveral occaſions, but they alſo very particularly inform us, that he who was the moſt conſiderable perſon of their ſtate, and the great miniſter of God, ſhould be notwithſtanding rejected by them.

And here, firſt, It is worth our noting that *Moſes* threatens the worſt of calamities to thoſe who ſhould refuſe to hear the great Prophet, like unto him whom God was to raiſe to his people, *Deut.* XVIII. *verſ.* 18.

Secondly, *David*, *Pſalm* CXVIII. *v.* 22. expreſſes this in theſe words, *The ſtone which the builders refuſed is become the head of the corner.* From which words it is evident, 1. That the Meſſiah was to be rejected. 2. That he was to be rejected by thoſe who were intruſted with the care of building the houſe. 3. That this was to be before he ſhould be acknowledged the great Miniſter of heaven.

God ſpeaks the ſame thing by *Iſaiah*, *Chap.* XXVIII. *verſ.* 6. *Behold, I lay in* Zion *for a foundation a ſtone, a tried ſtone, a precious corner ſtone, a ſure foundation, he that believeth ſhall not make haſte.* Which place is to be underſtood of the Meſſiah by the confeſſion of the *Jews* themſelves.

Daniel follows the ſame notion, *Chap.* II. *verſ.* 34, 35, *Thou ſaweſt till a ſtone was cut out without hands, which ſmote the image upon his feet, and brake them to pieces: and the ſtone became a great mountain, and filled the earth.*

On all which prophecies we may make theſe remarks; 1. That Jeſus Chriſt quotes moſt of them, as ſuch which by the *Jews* themſelves were owned to refer to the Meſſiah. Thus *Matt.* XXI. *verſ.* 42. he ſaith, *Did ye never read in the Scriptures, the ſtone which the builders rejected, the ſame is become the head of the corner.* And St. *Peter*, *Acts* IV. *verſ.* 11. *This is the ſtone which was ſet at nought by you builders, which is become the head of the corner.* St. *Paul* makes the ſame alluſion, *Epheſ.* II. *verſ.* 20. *And are built on the foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner ſtone.* And 1 *Cor.* III. *verſ.* 11. *For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jeſus Chriſt.* And when Jeſus Chriſt himſelf ſaith to *Peter*, *Matth.* XVI. *verſ.* 18. *Thou art* Peter, *and upon this rock I will build my church*, &c. He alludes to that of *Daniel*; *then was the iron, the clay, the braſs, the ſilver, and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the ſummer threſhing floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the ſtone which ſmote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.*

Our Saviour applyes alſo to the *Jews* thoſe prophecies which foretel their being offended at the Miniſters of heaven, in particular that of

Iſaiah,

Iſaiah, Chap. VI. *verſ.* 9. *Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but underſtand not, and ſee ye indeed, but perceive not.*

2. We may obſerve that the *Jews* of old applyed thoſe prophecies (as the Apoſtles did) to the hardning of their own nation, as appears from that of St. *Paul, Rom.* X. *verſ.* 21. *But to* Iſrael *he ſaith, all the day long I have ſtretched forth my hand unto a diſobedient and gain ſaying people.*

3. We muſt take notice, That the ſame temper which was in the ancient *Jews*, who rejected the Prophets, was found in thoſe who lived at the time of our Saviour; and for this we need only to read the deſcription which *Joſephus de Bello Judaico, Lib.* VII. *cap.* 3. gives of them, where he compares them with the *Sodomites*, which is the compariſon *Iſaiah* makes *Chap.* I. *verſ.* 10.

And laſt of all we may take notice, That *Joſephus* acknowledges that this blindneſs of the *Jews* was the cauſe of the final deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, which was to ſucceed the death of the Meſſiah, according to the expreſs oracle of *Daniel, Chap.* IX. *verſ.* 26.

CHAP. XX.

That the MESSIAH *was to dye; and an Account of the ſeveral Circumſtances of his Death.*

TO be convinced of this truth, we need only prove that what is ſet down in *Pſalm* XXII. *Iſaiah* LIII. *Daniel* IX. and *Zachariah* XIII. and other prophetical paſſages of holy Scripture, is to be underſtood of the Meſſiah; and the reading of them alone is ſufficient to ſatisfie the meaneſt capacity, that the perſon they point at was to loſe his life by violence, with ſeveral very infamous circumſtances.

Now it is certain that both ancient and modern *Jews* interpret theſe places of the Meſſiah; and it is as evident that the Apoſtles underſtood them ſo; and therefore all along applyed them to Jeſus Chriſt, following therein the known explications of the rabbies of their own nation.

It is plain alſo, That the death and ſuffering of our Saviour would have prov'd a more efficacious argument to refute the Apoſtles, than all the miracles of Jeſus Chriſt could have been to eſtabliſh their doctrine, if the prophetical writings had not ſo preciſely determined his ſufferings and death, with the ſeveral circumſtances of them.

It is alſo to be noted, That the prophecies referring to the death of the Meſſiah, are generally interwoven with idea's which point to other prophetical paſſages avowedly owned by the *Jews* to have relation to the Meſſiah. Thus if we compare *Pſalm* XXII. *verſ.* 28. with *Pſalm* LXXII. *verſ.* 8, 9. we ſhall find the ſame idea ſet forth in them both.

And becauſe this character was to be the moſt proper and diſtinguiſhing note of the Meſſiah, forſmuch as none with pleaſure do precipitate themſelves into death, or are maſters of the manner and circumſtances

of

of it, therefore God cauſed the ſame to be expreſſed by the Prophets with the greateſt plainneſs and exactneſs poſſible.

It can't be denied but that ſome of the Prophets have been very cruelly perſecuted, and that ſome of them have died in the midſt of torments: but concerning the death of Chriſt, we have many more particulars, *viz.*

1. That he was to be forſaken by his own friends, *Pſalm* XXII. *verſe* 11. *Be not far from me for trouble is near; for there is none to help.* And *Pſalm* LXIX. *verſe* 11. *I made ſackcloth alſo my garment, and I became a proverb to them.* And *verſe* 20. *Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heavineſs; and I looked for ſome to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.*

2. That he was to be expoſed to all manner of reproachful uſage. *Pſalm* XXII. *verſ.* 6, 7, and 8. *But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and deſpiſed of the people. All they that ſee me laugh me to ſcorn: they ſhoot out the lip, they ſhake the head, ſaying, he truſted in the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, ſeeing he delighted in him.* And *Pſalm* LXIX. *verſ.* 1, 2, 3, 4. *Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my ſoul. I ſink in deep mire, where there is no ſtanding; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying, my throat is dried, mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. They that hate me without cauſe are more than the hairs of my head, they that would deſtroy me, being my enemies wrongfully, are mighty.*

The ſame is repreſented to us *Iſaiah* LIII. *verſ.* 4, 5. *Surely he hath born our griefs and carried our ſorrows; yet we did eſteem him ſtricken, ſmitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities: the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and with his ſtripes we are healed.*

They take notice that he ſhould be beaten and abuſed, as appears from *Iſaiah* LIII. *verſ.* 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. *He is deſpiſed and rejected of men, a man of ſorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid, as it were our faces from him; he was deſpiſed, and we eſteemed him not. Surely he hath born our griefs, he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions,* &c. *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppreſſed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a ſheep before her ſhearers is dumb, ſo he openeth not his mouth. He was cut off from the land of the living, for the tranſgreſſion of my people was he ſtricken.*

4. They declare that he ſhould be ſold. *Zach.* II. *verſ.* 12, and 13. *And I ſaid unto them, if ye think good, give me my price, and if not forbear: ſo they weighed for my price thirty pieces of ſilver. And the Lord ſaid unto me, caſt it unto the potter; a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of ſilver and caſt them to the potter, in the houſe of the Lord,*

5. They make mention of his being condemned by the *Jews* and Heathens. *Pſalm* II. *verſe* 2. *The kings of the earth ſet themſelves, and the rulers take counſel together, againſt the Lord and againſt his anointed.* And *Pſalm* XXII. *verſe* 16. *For dogs have compaſſed me, the aſſembly of the wicked have incloſed me; they pierced my hands and my feet.* And *Pſalm* LXIX. *verſe* 12. *They that ſit in the gate ſpeak againſt me, and I was the ſong of the drunkards.* And *Iſaiah* LIII. *verſe* 8. *He was taken from priſon and from judgment,*

judgment, and who ſhall declare his generation; for he was cut off from the land of the living; for the tranſgreſſion of my people was he ſtricken.

6. They ſpecifie his death on the croſs. *Pſalm* XXII. *verſe* 16. *They pierced my hands and my feet.* And *Zach.* XII. *verſe* 10. *And they ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced.*

7. They intimate his dying between thieves. *Iſaiah* LIII. *verſe* 12. *Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he ſhall divide the ſpoil with the ſtrong; becauſe he has poured out his ſoul unto death, and was numbered with tranſgreſſors.*

8. They take notice of his being mocked before his death. *Pſalm* XXII. *verſ.* 6, 7, 8. *But I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men, and deſpiſed of the people. All they that ſee me laugh me to ſcorn, they ſhoot out the lip, they ſhake the head,* &c. And *Pſalm* LXIX. *verſ.* 17, 18, 19. *Hide not thy face from thy ſervant, for I am in trouble, hear me ſpeedily. Draw nigh unto my ſoul, and redeem it: deliver me becauſe of mine enemies. Thou haſt known my reproach, my ſhame, and my diſhonour: mine adverſaries are all before thee.*

9. That they who put him to death ſhould divide his garments. *Pſalm* XXII. *verſ.* 18. *They part my garments amongſt them, and caſt lots upon my veſture.*

10. That the Meſſiah ſhould complain that God had forſaken him in the hands of his enemies. *Pſalm* XXII. *verſ.* 1, 2. *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? why art thou ſo far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring. O my God, I cry in the day time, and thou heareſt me not; and in the night ſeaſon am not ſilent.*

11. That they would give him vinegar and gall to drink. *Pſalm* LXIX. *verſe* 21. *They gave me alſo gall for my meat, and in my thirſt they gave me vinegar to drink.*

12. They ſet before our eyes the manner of his death on the croſs. *Pſalm* XXII. *verſ.* 14, 15, 16, 17. *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midſt of my bowels. My ſtrength is dried up like a potſherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou haſt brought me into the duſt of death. For dogs have compaſſed me, the aſſembly of the wicked have enclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones, they look and ſtare upon me.* And *Iſaiah* LIII. *verſ.* 7, 8, 9.

13. That not one of his bones ſhould be broken. *Pſalm* XXXIV. *verſ.* 20. *He keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken.*

14. That he was to be buried in the ſepulchre of a rich man, *Iſaiah* LIII. *verſe* 9. *He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, becauſe he had done no violence, neither was deceit found in his mouth.*

We may make theſe following reflexions on the foregoing oracles.

1. That here are many very different events and circumſtances, all meeting in the ſame end.

2. That many of theſe paſſages that might be queſtioned whether they were particularly applicable to the Meſſiah are joyned with ſuch hints, as can no way agree with the Prophets that uttered them. Thus we find that in the XXII *Pſalm*, there are many expreſſions which cannot be applyed to *David*.

3. That

3. That moſt of theſe prophecies are avowedly attributed to the Meſſiah by the moſt ancient authors of the Synagogue. And the modern *Jews* themſelves refer them to ſome that ſuffer'd a violent death, as to Rabbi *Akiba*, who died in the ſecond century.

4. That the Apoſtles unanimouſly applyed them to Jeſus Chriſt, the true Meſſiah, following therein the general conſent of their nation.

CHAP. XXI.

That the MESSIAH *was ſoon after to riſe again.*

FORASMUCH as death entred into the world by ſin, and that the Meſſiah was to take it away, we may eaſily conceive, that if the Meſſiah were according to the Divine diſpoſal, to ſubmit to death, that he could not long continue ſubject to it. He who was to reſtore life to thoſe who were dead, could never be confin'd and impriſon'd in a grave: and he who was ſuperiour to *Enoch* and *Elias*, who aſcended into heaven, becauſe he alone was exalted to the right hand of God, to reign there for ever, as the prophecies concerning him aſſure us, ought certainly to leave his ſepulchre by a glorious reſurrection.

And this we are poſitively aſſured of by the ancient oracles. *Pſalm* XVI. *verſ.* 10, 11. *Thou wilt not leave my ſoul in hell; neither wilt thou ſuffer thine holy one to ſee corruption. Thou wilt ſhew me the path of life; in thy preſence is fulneſs of joy, at thy right hand there are pleaſures for evermore.* And to aſſure us that theſe and the like paſſages are applicable to none but the Meſſiah, we find in the ſame *Pſalms* expreſſions too high to be applyed to the authors themſelves: As for example, *Pſalm.* XXX. *verſ.* 1, 2, 3. *I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou haſt lifted me up, and haſt not made my foes to rejoyce over me. O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou haſt healed me. O Lord thou haſt brought up my ſoul from the grave, thou haſt kept me alive that I ſhould not go down to the pit.* And *Pſalm* XLI. *verſ.* 8, 9, 10. *An evil diſeaſe, ſay they, cleaveth faſt unto him, and now that he lieth, he ſhall riſe up no more. Yea, mine own familiar friend in whom I truſted, which did eat of my bread, hath lift up his heel againſt me. But thou, O Lord, be merciful unto me, and raiſe me up, that I may requite them.* And *Pſalm* XLIX. *verſe* 15. *But God will redeem my ſoul from the power of the grave, for he ſhall receive me.* Pſalm LVI. *verſ.* 11, 12, 13. *In God have I put my truſt, I will not be afraid what man can do unto me. Thy vows are upon me, O God, I will render praiſe unto thee. For thou haſt delivered my ſoul from death,* &c. Pſalm LXXII. *verſe* 20. *Thou who haſt ſhewed me great and ſore troubles, ſhalt quicken me again, and ſhalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.* Pſalm CXLIII. *verſ.* 11, 12. *Quicken me, O Lord, for thy names ſake, for thy righteouſneſs ſake bring my ſoul out of trou-*

ble;

ble: and of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and deſtroy all them that afflict my ſoul, for I am thy ſervant.

Hoſea ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe *Chap.* XIII. *verſ.* 14. *I will ranſom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy deſtruction: Repentance ſhall be hid from mine eyes.*

Iſaiah expreſſes the very ſame thing *Chap.* XXV. *verſ.* 8. *He will ſwallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people ſhall he take from off all the earth; for the Lord hath ſpoken it.* And yet more expreſſly *Chap.* LIII. *verſ.* 10, and 11. *Yet it pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him, he hath put him to grief; when thou ſhalt make his ſoul an offering for ſin, he ſhall ſee his ſeed, he ſhall prolong his days, and the pleaſure of the Lord ſhall proſper in his hand. He ſhall ſee of the travel of his ſoul, and ſhall be ſatisfied: by his knowledge ſhall my righteous ſervant juſtifie many; for he ſhall bear their iniquities.*

For the better underſtanding of which paſſages, we are to obſerve, 1. That the Meſſiah in many or moſt of them, compriſeth all believers with himſelf, according to that maxim of the *Jews*, who attribute to the Meſſiah the greateſt of all the Prophets, whatſoever God vouchſafed to any one of the Prophets; and according to this principle Jeſus Chriſt ſpeaks *Matth.* XII. *verſ.* 39, 40. *An evil and adulterous generation ſeeketh after a ſign, and there ſhall no ſign be given to it, but the ſign of the Prophet* Jonah. *For as* Jonah *was three days and three nights in the whales belly, ſo ſhall the ſon of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

2. That upon this account the Meſſiah is repreſented to us, not as riſing again alone, but as making all his brethren partakers of the ſame glory; which makes the Prophets ſpeak of him, not as a ſingle perſon, but in common with others, who by him are made poſſeſſors of the ſame advantages.

3. That moſt of theſe texts were quoted by the Apoſtles, who in ſo doing followed the ſenſe of the whole nation, as appears from *Acts* II. *verſ.* 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29. *Whom God hath raiſed, having looſed the pains of death: becauſe it was not poſſible that he ſhould be holden of it. For* David *ſpeaketh concerning him; I foreſaw the Lord always before my face, for he is at my right hand that I ſhould not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad: moreover alſo my fleſh ſhall reſt in hope: becauſe thou wilt not leave my ſoul in Hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thy holy one to ſee corruption. Thou haſt made known to me the ways of life: thou ſhalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely ſpeak unto you of the Patriarch* David, *that he is both dead and buried, and his ſepulchre is with us unto this day.* And *Acts* XIII. *verſ.* 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 37. *But God raiſed him from the dead. And he was ſeen many days of them which came up with him from* Galilee *to* Jeruſalem, *who are his witneſſes unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promiſe which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the ſame unto us their children, in that he hath raiſed up Jeſus again, as it is alſo written in the ſecond* Pſalm, *Thou art my ſon, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raiſed him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he ſaid on this wiſe, I will give you the ſure mercies of* David.

Wherefore he ſaith alſo in another Pſalm, *Thou ſhalt not ſuffer thine holy one to ſee corruption. For* David, *after he had ſerved his own generation, by the will of God fell aſleep, and was gathered to his fathers, and ſaw corruption. But he whom God raiſed again ſaw no corruption.*

In like manner we find St. *Paul* alluding to that of *Hoſea* XIII. *verſ.* 14. in I *Cor.* XV. *verſ.* 55. *O death where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory?*

CHAP. XXII.

That the Meſſiah was to aſcend into Heaven, and ſend down from thence the miraculous gifts of Prophecy, Languages, &c.

THIS was a thing which might rationally enough be expected (*b*); for the Meſſiah being to reſemble *Moſes*, who had not only the gifts of the holy ſpirit himſelf, but alſo in a manner communicated the ſame to the heads of the congregation of *Iſrael*: it was reaſonable to infer, That the Meſſiah was to receive much more eminent gifts, and to communicate them to far greater numbers.

But beſides this, God had expreſly promiſed it by *David*, Pſalm CX. *verſ.* 1, 2. where he repreſents the Meſſiah ſitting at the right hand of God. *The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, ſit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footſtool. The Lord ſhall ſend the rod of thy ſtrength out of* Zion: *Rule thou in the midſt of thine enemies.*

It is worth our noting, that *Daniel* repreſents to us the ſame notion where he ſpeaks of the kingdom of the Meſſiah, *Chap.* VII. *verſ.* 13, 14. *I ſaw in the night viſions, and behold one like the ſon of man, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages ſhould ſerve him: his dominion is an everlaſting dominion, which ſhall not paſs away, and his kingdom that which ſhall not be deſtroyed.* Where doth God dwell, unleſs in heaven?

David expreſſes himſelf in terms which import ſomething too great to be applyed to the ſymbolical ark of the covenant, *Pſalm* XXIV. *verſ.* 7, 8, 9. *Liſt up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlaſting doors, and the king of glory ſhall come in. Who is this king of glory? the Lord ſtrong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battel,* &c.

He ſpeaks further of the glorious kingdom of the Meſſiah, *Pſalm* XLV. *verſ.* 5, 6, 7. *Thine arrows are ſharp in the heart of the kings enemies; whereby the people fall under thee. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the ſcepter of thy kingdom is a right ſcepter. Thou loveſt righteouſneſs and hateſt wickedneſs, therefore God thy God hath anointed thee with the oyl of gladneſs above thy fellows.* 'Tis evident that *David* addreſſes himſelf there to the Meſſiah, becauſe he ſtiles him a God anointed above his fellows.

(*b*) Deut. xviii. 18.

lows. And he purſues the ſame idea, *Pſalm* LXVIII. *verſ.* 18. *Thou haſt aſcended on high, thou haſt led captivity captive; thou had received gifts for men, yea for the rebellious alſo, that the Lord God might dwell amongſt them.* Nothing can be imagined more expreſs than theſe words, which lively repreſent to us the aſcenſion of the Meſſiah, and the pouring forth of prophetical gifts, to bring the heathens to the ſervice of God.

Iſaiah ſpeaks the ſame *Chap.* XLIV. *verſ.* 3. *For I will pour water upon him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my ſpirit upon thy ſeed, and my bleſſing upon thine off-ſpring.* The waters here ſpoken of, according to the ordinary ſtile of the Prophets, are nothing elſe but the graces of God's Spirit.

Joel expreſſes himſelf very plainly in this matter, *Chap.* II. *verſ.* 28, 29, 30, 31, 32. *And it ſhall come to paſs afterward, that I will pour out of my ſpirit upon all fleſh, and your ſons and your daughters ſhall propheſie, your old men ſhall dream dreams, your young men ſhall ſee viſions. And alſo upon the ſervants, and upon the handmaids in thoſe days will I pour out my ſpirit. And I will ſhew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire and pillars of ſmoke. The ſun ſhall be turned into darkneſs, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. And it ſhall come to paſs that whoſoever ſhall call on the name of the Lord ſhall be delivered: for in mount* Zion, *and in* Jeruſalem, *ſhall be deliverance, as the Lord hath ſaid, and in the remnant whom the Lord ſhall call.*

Nothing can be conceived more particular than this oracle, concerning the effuſion of the prophetical gifts upon the ſervants of the Meſſiah, after his aſcenſion. For 1. He clearly hints at the ſeveral ways of prophecy, which ſhall be beſtowed upon the ſubjects of the Meſſiah. 2. That this great event was to be before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, which St. *Peter* foretels as a thing at the door, *Acts* II. *verſ.* 30, 31, 32. after he had ſhewed that the wonderful effuſion of the Spirit at pentecoſt, was a literal accompliſhing of the prophecy of *Joel*, he adds, *Therefore being a Prophet, and knowing that God had ſworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the fleſh, he would raiſe up Chriſt to ſit on his throne: he ſeeing this before, ſpake of the reſurrection of Chriſt, that his ſoul was not left in hell, neither his fleſh did ſee corruption. This Jeſus has God raiſed up, whereof we all are witneſſes.*

Ezechiel goes on with the ſame views with *Joel*, *Chap.* XXXVI. *verſ.* 26, and 27. *A new heart alſo will I give you, and a new ſpirit will I put within you; and I will take away the ſtony heart out of your fleſh, and I will give you an heart of fleſh. And I will put my ſpirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes, and ye ſhall keep my judgments and do them.* And *Chap.* XXXIX. *verſ.* 29. *Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my ſpirit upon the houſe of* Iſrael, *ſaith the Lord God.*

And *Zachariah* agrees with both the foregoing Prophets, *Chap.* XII. *verſe* 10. *And I will pour upon the houſe of* David, *and upon the inhabitants of* Jeruſalem, *the ſpirit of grace and of ſupplications; and they ſhall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they ſhall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only ſon, and ſhall be in bitterneſs for him, as one that is in bitterneſs for his firſt-born.*

'Tis obvious to make theſe following obſervations upon theſe oracles.

1. That the Meſſiah was to be raiſed above the reach of any of his enemies.

2. That he was to aſcend to heaven, and to be inſtated there in glory, in order to his being dignified and glorified above all nations.

3. That he was from thence to ſend down Prophetical graces plentifully, which made his entrance into heaven a kind of triumph.

4. That this great event was to precede the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, to which the Prophet *Joel* in the fore-cited place ſeems to allude. The Meſſiah was to form a new ſociety, which was to be regulated, not by the laws given on mount *Sinai*, but by thoſe which were to be publiſhed from mount *Zion*.

CHAP. XXIII.

That the GENTILES *in the Time of the* MESSIAH *were to be called to the Knowledge of the true God.*

THIS article being one of the moſt important and moſt viſible characters of the times of the Meſſiah, and alſo the great effect of his miniſtry, we ſee that God had a particular care to divulge the ſame by a multitude of prophetical repreſentations of it.

For not only had he declared that the *ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the ſerpents head* (*l*); that is, the works of the Devil. And we can't deny, but that the errors and idolatries of the *Gentiles*, and their vices which ariſe from thence, were the fruits of ſin, which this unhappy ſpirit brought into the world. It was not only foretold that God would *perſwade* Japhet *to dwell in the tents of* Sem (*m*), by uniting the poſterities of both thoſe Patriarchs in one and the ſame religion. Not only had he ſignified that the Meſſiah ſhould reign over the children of *Seth*, that is over all the poſterity of *Noah*, the off-ſpring of *Cham* not excepted. Not only had he foretold that all nations, kindreds, and families ſhould be bleſſed in the Meſſiah (*n*).

But God went much farther afterwards, for as the light of the revelation encreaſed, ſo the ſame was declared more diſtinctly. For,

1. The Patriarch *Jacob* tells that the Meſſiah ſhould be the deſire and expectation of all nations. *Gen.* XLIX. *verſe* 10. *The ſcepter ſhall not depart from* Judah, *nor a law-giver from between his feet, until* Shiloh *come*; *and unto him ſhall the gathering of the people be.*

2. *Moſes* threatens the *Jews*, that if they deſpiſed the law of God, ſtrangers, that is, *Gentiles*, ſhould be preferred before them. *Deut.* XXVIII. *verſe* 43. *The ſtranger that is within thee ſhall get up above thee very high*; *and thou ſhalt come down very low.* The ſame Prophet menaceth them from God, that he would ſtir up their jealouſie, by calling a fooliſh

(*l*) Gen. iii. 15. (*m*) Gen. ix. 27.
(*n*) Gen. xii. & Ch. xviii. & xxii.

a fooliſh people to his ſervice and worſhip. *Deut.* XXXII. *verſe* 21. *They have moved me to jealouſie with that which is not God, they have provoked me to anger with their vanities, and I will move them to jealouſie with thoſe which are not a people, I will provoke them to anger with a fooliſh nation.* Nothing can be ſaid more expreſs and particular than theſe laſt words of that great law giver and founder of the ſtate of the *Jews*.

3. *David* ſets forth the empire of the Meſſiah, as that which was to reach over all the earth. *Pſalm* II. *verſe* 8. *Aſk of me, and I ſhall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for thy poſſeſſion.* And *Pſalm* XXII. *verſ.* 27, 28, 29, 30. *All the ends of the world ſhall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kingdoms of the nations ſhall worſhip before thee. For the kingdom is the Lords, and he is Governour amongſt the nations. All they that be fat upon the earth, ſhall eat and worſhip; all they that go down to the duſt ſhall bow before him. A ſeed ſhall ſerve him, it ſhall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.* Pſalm LXXII. *verſ.* 8, 9, 10, 11. *He ſhall have dominion from ſea to ſea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderneſs ſhall bow before him; and his enemies ſhall lick the duſt. The kings of* Tarſhiſh *and of the iſles ſhall bring preſents, the kings of* Sheba *and* Seba *ſhall offer gifts. Yea all kings ſhall fall down before him, all nations ſhall ſerve him.* Which prophecy is the more remarkable, becauſe the promiſe made to *Abraham* is there repeated in ſo many words, *viz. That all nations of the earth ſhould be bleſſed in the Meſſiah.* Pſalm CII. *verſe* 15. *So the heathen ſhall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory.* And *Pſalm* CX. *verſe* 2. *The Lord ſhall ſend the rod of thy ſtrength out of* Zion: *rule thou in the midſt of thine enemies.* One ought to tranſcribe almoſt the whole book of *Pſalms*, to take notice of all the paſſages which are to this purpoſe.

The Prophet *Hoſea* declares in general terms, That it was not an impoſſible thing for thoſe who had been God's people to ceaſe to be ſo; or for thoſe that were not his people to become his people; *Chap.* I. *verſe* 10. *Yet the number of the children of* Iſrael *ſhall be as the ſand of the ſea, which cannot be meaſur'd or numbred; and it ſhall come to paſs, that in the place where it was ſaid unto them, ye are not my people, there it ſhall be ſaid unto them, ye are the ſons of the living God.*

Iſaiah mentions this ſo often, and in ſuch an emphatical manner, that it ſeems to be the main thing he drives at in all his writings, *Chap.* II. *verſe* 2, 3. he ſpeaks thus: *And it ſhall come to paſs in the laſt days that the mountain of the Lord's houſe ſhall be eſtabliſhed in the top of the mountains, and ſhall be exalted above the hills, and all nations ſhall flow unto it. And many people ſhall go and ſay, Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the houſe of the God of* Jacob; *and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of* Zion *ſhall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from* Jeruſalem. And *Chap.* XI. *verſe* 10. *In that day there ſhall be a root of* Jeſſe, *which ſhall ſtand for an enſign of the people, to it ſhall the* Gentiles *ſeek.* And *Chap.* XVIII. *verſe* 7. he makes a manifeſt alluſion to the *expectation of all nations:* In *Chap.* XLII. *verſe* 1, 2, 3, 4. he repeats the ſame thing; *Behold my ſervant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my ſoul delighteth; I will put my ſpirit upon him, he ſhall bring forth judgment to the* Gentiles. *He ſhall not cry, nor lift up, nor cauſe his voice to be heard in the ſtreets. A bruiſed reed ſhall he not break, and the*

ſmoking flax ſhall he not quench, he ſhall bring forth judgment unto the earth; and the iſles ſhall wait for his law. Chap. LV. verſe 4, 5. *Behold I have given thee for a witneſs of the people, a leader and a commander to the people. Behold, thou ſhalt call a nation that thou knoweſt not, and nations that knew not thee ſhall run unto thee, becauſe of the Lord thy God, and for the holy One of* Iſrael, *for he hath glorified thee.* But one ſee's theſe truths in their greateſt luſtre in the LX *Chap.* of his prophecies, *verſ.* 3, 4, 5. *The* Gentiles *ſhall come to thy light, and kings to the brightneſs of thy riſing. Lift up thine eyes round about, and ſee; all that gather themſelves together, they come to thee, thy ſons ſhall come from far, and thy daughters ſhall be nurſed at thy ſide. Then thou ſhalt ſee and ſhine, and thine heart ſhall fear and be enlarged, becauſe the abundance of the ſea ſhall be converted unto thee, the forces of the* Gentiles *ſhall come unto thee.* And *Chap.* LXII. *verſ.* 2. *The* Gentiles *ſhall ſee thy righteouſneſs, and all kings thy glory: and thou ſhalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord ſhall name.* And *verſ.* 11, and 12. *Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the ends of the world, ſay ye to the daughter of* Zion, *Behold thy ſalvation cometh; behold his reward is with him, and his work is before him. And they ſhall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord; and thou ſhalt be called, Sought out, A City not forſaken.* And *Chap.* LXV. *verſ.* 1. *I am ſought of them that aſked not for me; I am found of them that ſought me not: I ſaid, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.* And *Chap.* LXVI. *verſe* 18. *It ſhall come to paſs, that I will gather all nations and tongues, and they ſhall come and ſee my glory.*

Amos (who was contemporary with *Iſaiah*) ſpeaks the ſame thing, *Chap.* IX. *verſ.* 11, 12. *In that day will I raiſe up the tabernacle of* David *which is fallen, and cloſe up the branches thereof; and I will raiſe up his ruins, and I will build it, as in the days of old. That they may poſſeſs the remnant of* Edom, *and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, ſaith the Lord which doth this.*

The Prophet *Micah* alſo follows the Prophet *Iſaiah* ſtep by ſtep. *Mich.* IV. *verſ.* 1, 2, 3. *But in the laſt days it ſhall come to paſs, that the mountain of the houſe of the Lord ſhall be eſtabliſhed in the top of the mountains, and it ſhall be exalted above the hills, and people ſhall flow unto it. And many nations ſhall come and ſay, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the houſe of the God of* Jacob, *and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law ſhall go forth of* Zion, *and the word of the Lord from* Jeruſalem. *And he ſhall judge among many people, and rebuke ſtrong nations afar off, and they ſhall beat their ſwords into plow ſhares, and their ſpears into pruning-hooks: nation ſhall not lift up a ſword againſt nation, neither ſhall they learn war any more.*

Zephaniah is as clear as any of the reſt, *Chap.* II. *verſ.* 11. *They ſhall worſhip him, every one from his place, even all the iſles of the heathen.* And *Chap.* III. *verſ.* 9, 10. *Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to ſerve him with one conſent. From beyond the rivers of* Ethiopia, *my ſuppliants, the daughter of my diſperſed ſhall bring mine offering.*

Jeremiah in the fourth *Chapter* of his prophecies, *verſ.* 2. confirms the ame truth; as likewiſe *Chap.* XVI. *verſ.* 19. and more expreſly *Chap.* XXXI. *verſe* 34. *And they ſhall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every*

every man his brother, ſaying, Know the Lord; for they ſhall all know me from the leaſt of them unto the greateſt of them, ſaith the Lord.

After the return of the captivity, we find that the Prophets ſtill purſued the ſame idea's. *Haggai* II. *verſ.* 7, 8. *And I will ſhake all nations, and the deſire of all nations ſhall come: and I will fill this houſe with glory ſaith the Lord of Hoſts. The ſilver is mine, and the gold is mine, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.*

Zechariah ſpeaks in like manner, *Chap.* II. *verſ.* 10, 11. *Sing and rejoyce, O daughter of* Zion; *for lo I come, and I will dwell in the midſt of thee, ſaith the Lord. And many nations ſhall be joyned to the Lord in that day, and ſhall be my people; and I will dwell in the midſt of thee, and thou ſhalt know that the Lord of Hoſts hath ſent me unto thee.* And *Chap.* VIII. *verſ.* 20, 21, 22. *Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, it ſhall yet come to paſs, that there ſhall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: and the inhabitants of one city ſhall go to another, ſaying; let us go ſpeedily to pray before the Lord, and to ſeek the Lord of Hoſts, I will go alſo. Yea, many people and ſtrong nations ſhall come to ſeek the Lord of Hoſts in* Jeruſalem, *and to pray before the Lord.* And *Chap.* XI. *verſ.* 10. he expreſſes the ſame thing more diſtinctly. *And I will cut off the chariot from* Ephraim, *and the horſe from* Jeruſalem, *and the battel bow ſhall be cut off, and he ſhall ſpeak peace unto the heathen, and his dominion ſhall be from ſea to ſea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.*

Malachi ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe with the greateſt clearneſs imaginable, *Chap.* I. *verſ.* 10, 11. *Who is there among you that ſhuts the doors, or kindles fire on mine altar for nought? I have no pleaſure in you ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand: for from the riſing of the ſun, even unto the going down of the ſame, my name ſhall be great among the* Gentiles, *and in every place incenſe ſhall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name ſhall be great among the heathen, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.*

On all which paſſages one may make theſe obſervations:

1. That all this whole ſeries of idea's hath as much connexion to one another, as the words of thoſe oracles have which we have now alledged.

2. That theſe prophets have ſet it forth with all its poſſible characters, by the original of theſe people, calling them the children of *Seth*, by their countreys, *Egypt*, *Aſſyria*, the *Eaſt* and *Weſt*; by their idolatry, by their averſion to the *Jews*, their ignorance, *&c.*

3. That theſe prophecies were generally underſtood by the *Jews* of old, of the calling of the *Gentiles*, as appears from the uſe the Apoſtles made of them when they preached to the *Gentiles*.

4. That foraſmuch as God had ordered proſelytes to be received into the Jewiſh communion, he ſeem'd thereby to have hinted to them, that what he had enjoyn'd them as to particulars, ought with much more reaſon to be practiced in general to all the nations of the world, and ought alſo to be univerſally deſired.

5. That the modern *Jews* themſelves conſtantly believ'd, that the Meſſiah ſhould lead the *Gentiles* to repentance. So *Kimchi*, *Moſes Maimonides*, and many other authors, ſince the *Talmudiſts*.

6. That the opinion which the *Jews* have entertained, that the Meſ-

ſiah, as a great conqueror, was to ſubdue the nations, proceeds only from the ſenſe of the oppreſſion they have been, and ſtill are, under, which makes them ſo earneſtly deſire a temporal deliverance from the power of the *Gentiles*, by means of the Meſſiah: and the pompous expreſſion of ſome of the Prophets, have ſtrengthen'd this belief in them; tho' they cannot deny but that the ſame prophetical paſſages do imply that the Meſſiah was to ſubject the *Gentiles* by the way of inſtruction.

CHAP. XXIV.

That the JEWS *were to be rejected in the Time of the* MESSIAH.

THERE are three things which make this particular very conſiderable.

The firſt is, That it ſeems altogether oppoſite to the deſign of God, who was entered into covenant with the *Jews*, excluding all other nations of the earth.

The ſecond is, That nothing ever was a greater ſcandal to the *Jews* than the thoughts of a poſſibility that God ſhould ever caſt off their nation.

The third is, That the rejection of the *Jews*, ſeem'd leſs poſſible in the time of the Meſſiah, than at any other time: the Meſſiah being, according to their perſwaſion, to procure the ſalvation of the *Jews* in the firſt place, and before other nations were made partakers of thoſe bleſſings which he brought along with him.

And it was upon this account, that God hath forgot nothing which might make thoſe oracles that relate to the rejection of the *Jews*, in the time of the Meſſiah, very ſenſible.

The chief priviledges which made the *Jews* conſider themſelves, as God's peculiar people, were theſe.

1. God himſelf was in a peculiar manner their king and Soveraign; which gave *Joſephus* occaſion to call their ſtate a theocracy.

2. Their religious ſervice did wholly depend upon God; who had inſtituted their order of prieſthood.

3. God had placed them in a country by themſelves, and ſeparated them from all other nations.

4. God had given them the *Urim* and *Thummim*, which gave them an infallible reſolution in all important caſes happening to their ſtate; which was an evident mark of the Divine preſence and direction.

5. God gave them particular marks of his bleſſing, the extraordinary fruitfulneſs which continually uſher'd in their ſabbatical year; the ſecurity which they enjoyed during their three ſolemn feaſts; and above all, the deliverers which he from time to time rais'd up for them, their fourteen judges and kings.

And

And God alſo threatned them with evils oppoſite to theſe bleſſings; and all this is denounced againſt them ſtep by ſtep.

1. He declares that he would no longer be their God.

2. That he would abolish and reject their order of prieſthood, which was accordingly executed by degrees.

3. That he would turn them out of their own country, without recovery.

4. That they ſhould have no more Prophets or revelations.

5. That he would take away from them all the marks of his protection. The paſſages expreſſing theſe ſeveral particulars are here ſubjoyn'd, which may be eaſily rang'd under the foregoing heads, that we may underſtand the better that God hath plainly foretold the rejection of the *Jews* at the time of the Meſſiah.

1. *Moſes* then threatens them with a terrible deſolation, *Deut.* XXVIII. *verſ.* 28, 29. *The Lord ſhall ſmite thee with madneſs and blindneſs, and aſtoniſhment of heart: and thou ſhalt grope at noon day, as the blind gropeth in darkneſs, and thou ſhalt not proſper in thy ways, and thou ſhalt be only oppreſſed and ſpoiled evermore, and no man ſhall ſave thee.*

Manaſſeh acknowledges that God in this paſſage foretels, not only their firſt deſolation under *Nebuchadnezzar*, but alſo that which happened under *Titus Veſpaſian*. The eagle mention'd at the 49*th. verſe* of that *Chapter*, being not only applicable to *Nebuchadnezzar*, whom *Ezechiel*, *Chap.* XVII. repreſents under that notion, but more particularly to the *Roman* emperour *Titus*, whoſe eagles gave a literal accompliſhment to that prophecy.

This makes it evident, That at the ſame time when God threatens them with their firſt deſolation, he alſo denounces to them the laſt; and that conſequently we may apply thoſe paſſages to the ſecond rejection of the *Jews*, which were ſpoken of the firſt.

2. *Hoſea* expreſſeth the ſame in his firſt, ſecond, and third *Chapters*, where he particularly fortels their being deprived of the royal dignity, prieſthood and prophecy.

3. *Iſaiah* ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe in his firſt, ſecond, and fifth *Chapters*, as alſo *Chap.* XXVIII, XLII, L, and LXVI. and in his XXV. *Chapter* he ſpeaks as if no reſtoration was to be expected.

4. *Amos* repreſents the ſame thing, *Chap.* V. *verſ.* 16, 17, and 21, 22. *Therefore the Lord the God of Hoſts, the Lord ſaith thus; wailing ſhall be in all ſtreets, and they ſhall ſay in all the high-ways, Alas! alas! and they ſhall call the huſbandman to mourning, and ſuch as are ſkilful of lamentation to wailing. And in all vineyards ſhall be wailing; for I will paſs through thee ſaith the Lord. I hate, I deſpiſe your feaſt-days; and I will not ſmell in your ſolemn aſſemblies: though ye offer me burnt-offerings and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them, neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beaſts.* Where he hints that their deſolation ſhall be without recovery.

5. *Jeremiah* is very expreſs in *Chap.* V, VI, and X. *verſe* 11. where he declares that their deſtruction ſhould be without remedy: as alſo *Chap.* XII. and XXXI.

6. *Daniel* follows their ſteps, *Chap.* IX. *verſ.* 25, 26, 27. where he directly points at the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the temple. The words are theſe; *Know therefore and underſtand, that from the going forth*

of

of the commandment, to reſtore and build Jeruſalem, *unto the Meſſiah the prince, ſhall be ſeven weeks, and threeſcore and two weeks the ſtreet ſhall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after the threeſcore and two weeks ſhall* MESSIAH *be cut off, but not for himſelf: and the people of the prince that ſhall come, ſhall deſtroy the city and the ſanctuary, and the end thereof ſhall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war deſolations are determined.* 'Tis worth our obſerving, That *Joſephus* (*o*) the hiſtorian a little after the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, acknowledges that this prophecy of *Daniel* did expreſly foretel the ruin of the temple of *Jeruſalem*, and of the Jewiſh government, by the arms of the *Roman* empire, which himſelf was an eye-witneſs of.

7. *Zachariah* ſpeaks after the ſame manner, *Chap.* XI. *verſ.* 9. *Then ſaid I, I will not feed you, that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the reſt eat, every one the fleſh of another.*

8. And *Malachi* follows theſe common idea's, *Chap.* I. *verſ.* 10, and 11. *Who is there among you that ſhuts the doors for nought? Neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleaſure in you ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the riſing of the ſun, even unto the going down of the ſame, my name ſhall be great among the* Gentiles, *and in every place incenſe ſhall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name ſhall be great among the heathen, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.*

I cannot conceive how any that conſider the ſucceſſion of theſe idea's, ſo interwoven one with another, can have the leaſt doubt whether the *Jews* were to be rejected at the coming of the Meſſiah, or no; eſpecially ſince the Apoſtles and St. *Paul* in particular have made it appear, that the Prophets ſo plainly did foretel this truth.

CHAP. XXV.

Of the Time which ſucceeded the Publiſhing of theſe Prophecies, till the Coming of the MESSIAH.

THUS we have ſeen an abridgment of the moſt remarkable oracles utter'd, either by God himſelf, or by Prophets, whom he made uſe of to declare his deſigns. I might eaſily have alledged a far greater number, but I choſe rather to content myſelf with theſe, to avoid the confuſion which the multiplicity of citations is apt to occaſion. And I queſtion not but theſe I have mention'd, will ſuffice to give us an idea of God's promiſe concerning the Meſſiah ſufficiently great, and enable us to make a judgment, whether that which the Chriſtians declare to have been the accompliſhment of it, be ſo indeed.

In the mean time, for the further clearing of this matter, I deſire the reader to make ſome reflexions on the whole matter, which ſeem to me to deſerve a ſerious attention.

The

(*o*) Antiq. Lib. x.

The firſt is, That God hath by degrees put an end to thoſe diviſions that were between ſome other nations and the *Jews*, founded on their hopes of the promiſe of the Meſſiah, as the time of its accompliſhment drew near.

We hear little now of the enmity of the *Iſhmaelites* againſt the *Jews*; God having placed them in the deſert of *Paran*, they have indeed continued there in a manner invincible, but alſo without any great communication with their neighbour nations.

As for the *Moabites* and *Ammonites*, they had their kingdoms on the borders of the holy land, and continued there till the time of *Nebuchadnezzar*, ſince which we find little mention made of them, as being in a manner wholly confounded with other nations; only we meet with ſome few memorials of the *Ammonites*, whoſe pretenſions to that promiſe were the weaker of the two, as being the poſterity of *Lot*'s younger daughter.

It is worth our obſerving, That moſt of the prophecies of *David*, as well as of the following Prophets, which thunder forth ſuch terrible denunciations againſt the pride of thoſe people, threatning them with the curſe of God and final deſtruction, ſeem to have an eye to the old quarrel and jealouſie, their ſtate quarrel which happened afterwards, ſucceeding to this their firſt averſion, and hatred of the *Jews*.

The ſtate and government of the *Edomites*, as well as their jealouſie againſt *Iſrael*, continued till after *Cyrus*, who granted them the liberty of returning to their own country, as well as to the *Jews*, who had been carried away captives with them by *Nebuchadnezzar*; but contrary to the hope they had of being re-eſtabliſhed to their former eſtate, we find, that according to the prophecy of *Malachy*, they continued in bondage to their neighbours, yea to the *Jews* themſelves, until *Herod* the *Edomite* poſſeſſing himſelf of the throne of *Judea*, was probably flattered by thoſe of his own nation, and by ſome *Jews* alſo, into a belief of his being the promiſed Meſſiah.

We muſt alſo take notice, That the Divine Providence ſeems to have continued this people ſo long, on purpoſe that the ſpirit of jealouſie, which was between them and the *Jews*, might preſerve the notion of the promiſed Meſſiah more freſh and lively, and to engage men to a more attentive conſideration of the prophecies concerning the ſame; and that God by confounding them afterwards with other nations, intended wholly to take away their pretenſions, the ſervice which before they rendered to the Jewiſh church, being no longer needful, after ſo clear and diſtinct a revelation.

This reflexion will be owned to be more than a conjecture, if we conſider God's dealing with the ten tribes: God ſuffers them to be carried away captives by *Salmanaſſar*, leaving only the tribes of *Judah*, *Levi*, and *Benjamin* to be afterwards the depoſitaries of the Divine oracles.

The ſecond is, That as it appears that God hath kept ſome diſtance of time in his revelation, that the authority of the Prophets might be fully and firmly eſtabliſhed, which, as I have obſerved, was done by the accompliſhment of ſome prophecies, reſpecting ſome particular matters of fact near at hand; ſo it pleaſed God for above four hundred years, to leave the *Jews* without the light of prophecy; becauſe that which he had

had given them till *Malachy*'s time, was ſufficient to make them know the Meſſiah, when he ſhould appear in the world.

The third is, That this ceſſation of the gifts of prophecy among the *Jews*, did ſerve to increaſe their deſires for the coming of the Meſſiah, in whoſe days thoſe gifts (which were the peculiar glory of their nation) were to be reſtored in far greater abundance, than had ever been granted to them before.

A fourth reflexion which is well worth our attentive conſideration, is, That God ſo ordered it in his Providence, that all the books of the *Old Teſtament* were tranſlated into the *Greek* about one hundred years after *Malachy*, that they might be communicated to all nations, the *Greek* tongue being at that time, and indeed ever ſince the reign of *Alexander* the Great, a language the moſt known and generally ſpoken in the world, he having with his power carried it into the *South* and *Eaſt*.

It is natural to conceive, that the Divine Providence hereby deſigned theſe three things:

Firſt, To eſtabliſh and confirm the authority of thoſe Divine oracles, by delivering them into the hands of the heathen, by the publick authority of the Jewiſh nation, at the deſire of a king of *Egypt*.

Secondly, To prevent cavilling about the explication of thoſe oracles. Thus, for inſtance, we ſee there is no place left to diſpute the tranſlation of that prophecy, *Behold a virgin ſhall conceive*, ſeeing the LXX interpreters, who were *Jews*, have rendred it ſo themſelves, ſome ages before any conteſts were ſtarted about it between the *Jews* and *Chriſtians*.

The third was, To prepare and diſpoſe the heathen for receiving the religion of the Meſſiah.

And indeed we may eaſily comprehend, 1. That it was neceſſary that the prophetical writings ſhould be communicated to the heathen, in order to their ready ſubmitting themſelves to the authority of the Meſſiah, whom they knew by thoſe characters which had been given of him. 2. That it was not fitting that the heathen ſhould wholly depend on the authority of the *Jews*, foraſmuch as the ſame Divine oracles do expreſly affirm, That the Meſſiah was to be rejected by the greateſt part of them.

I ſhall conclude theſe reflexions with a ſhort view of the ſtate of the common-wealth and religion of the *Jews*, ſince the laſt of the Prophets.

Firſt, One finds that this government ſubſiſted as diſtinct from all other nations of the earth, as ever it did before: we ſee the honour wherewith *Alexander* the Great treated their high prieſt, and that when he was appointed arbitrator of the difference between them and the *Samaritans*, he determin'd the matter in favour of the *Jews*.

One ſee's that *Alexander* preſerved them in the enjoyment of their rights and liberties, as they enjoyed them under the kings of *Perſia*; and in particular exempted them from paying any tribute every ſeventh year, becauſe then they did not ſow their ground, and conſequently could not reap.

And if we find that *Ptolemy* took *Jeruſalem* on a ſabbath day, the *Jews* making conſcience of defending themſelves, becauſe the law required their ceaſing from all work; from whence *Agatharcides* an heathen author takes occaſion to blame their law; if we find him carrying a great number

number of *Jews* with him into *Egypt*, yet withal we find him treating them with as much kindneſs as the *Macedonians* themſelves, appointing diſtinct places in *Egypt* and *Lybia* for their habitation.

If we find that powerful princes, ſuch as *Antiochus Epiphanes*, and ſome others of his ſucceſſors, broke the power of the *Jews*, prophaned their temple, and forc'd great numbers of them to abjure their religion; yet we ſee them alſo at the ſame time, giving the higheſt inſtances of an immoveable conſtancy and courage in defence of their law, and in enduring the moſt exquiſite tortures; we ſee others of them, encouraged with the love of their country, as well as religion, putting themſelves into a poſture of defence, purifying the temple, and celebrating a feſtival which is obſerved even at this day, and laſtly obtaining favourable treaties at the hands of their enemies; as may be ſeen in the books of the *Maccabees*, and in the twelfth book of *Joſephus* his *Antiquities*: yea, we find their name and glory at that time ſpread as far as *Lacædemon*, with which common-wealth they made an alliance during the high-prieſthood of *Onias*.

One ſee's them after this ſo conſiderable, under the ſucceſſor of *Antiochus* their perſecutor, that even thoſe kings ſue for their alliance with great preſents.

One ſee's that *Ptolomy Philometor* granted to *Onias* the ſon, leave to build a temple in *Egypt*, for the convenience of thoſe *Jews* whom *Ptolomy* the ſon of *Lagus* had carried thither; as well as for thoſe who left their country for the oppreſſion of the *Seleucidæ*; for *Judea* being ſituate between *Syria* and *Egypt*, was ordinarily the theatre of war between thoſe two ſtates. 'Tis here worth our noting, That the *Jews* undertook the building of the temple in *Egypt*, as thinking themſelves authoriz'd by that prophecy *Iſai.* XIX. 24. it being a thing otherwiſe forbid by the law.

One ſees in the ſame prince's reign a great conteſt between the *Samaritans* and the *Jews* about the pre-eminence of their temples, at *Jeruſalem* and mount *Garizim*, decided by him in favour of the *Jews*: on which occaſion the *Jews* ſhewed that prince their law, and acquainted him with the ſeries of their hiſtory, to confute the *Samaritans* pretenſions.

One ſee's after this, when the *Jews* had conferred the ſoveraignty and high-prieſthood on *Simon*, that their ſtate became ſo powerful, that under *Hyrcanus* his ſucceſſor they were in a condition to attacque their enemies in *Syria*, and compel the *Edomites* to admit circumciſion: *Ariſtobulus* his ſon was crowned, his brother ſucceeded him in the royal dignity, and left the ſtate in a flouriſhing condition, notwithſtanding the civil and foreign wars he was engaged in.

We find afterwards, That the inteſtine diviſions among the ſucceſſors of thoſe Jewiſh princes, did by degrees open a gap for foreign power to enter and prevail over them, *Pompey* ſiding with *Hyrcanus* took *Jeruſalem*, and made the *Jews* tributary to the *Romans*, but without changing any thing in their religion.

Julius Cæſar a while after beſtowed the kingdom of *Judæa* upon *Herod* the *Edomite*. *Auguſtus* after him uſed the *Jews* with the ſame equity as *Pompey* before him had done, as appears from one of his declarations publiſh'd

publiſh'd in favour of the *Jews* of *Egypt* and *Aſia*, recorded by *Joſephus*. This *Herod* and *Auguſtus* are the ſame under whom our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt was born.

It is evident therefore, That the ſtate of the *Jews* has continued diſtinct from other nations, and ſufficiently known from the time of the Prophet *Malachy*, until *Herod*.

We may alſo truly aſſert, That whatever inclination the *Jews* of old had, for the idolatries of their neighbours, yet we don't find them given that way during this interval, between the laſt of their Prophets and *Herod*, as if the charge and command of that Prophet *Malachy* had always ſounded in their ears, *Mal.* IV. *verſe* 4. *Remember the law of* Moſes *my ſervant, &c.*

One ſee's that the *Jews* under the *Maccabees*, in great numbers ſuffered martyrdom, rather than abjure their religion; and that they obſerved the ceremonial law with all carefulneſs, of which *Auguſtus* himſelf was witneſs.

One ſee's that under ſtrangers and heathen kings they exempted themſelves from anſwering any ſuit at law on the ſabbath day, from paying tribute the ſeventh year, and preſerving the rights and priviledges of their temple in ſpight of all oppoſition. Laſtly, one finds them, during *Herod*'s government, ſupported by the favour of the *Roman* empire, in refuſing to ſet up the emperour's trophees, for fear leaſt ſome images might be hid under them, which they looked upon as a crime againſt their law.

I am not ignorant, that ſince *Malachy*, ſome hereſies ſprung up among the *Jews*, their commerce with the *Greeks* (who applyed themſelves to philoſophical ſpeculations) having contributed to make them much more diſputacious than they were before. The authority likewiſe of their kings, who were high-prieſts alſo, may have had a great ſtroke in blemiſhing the purity of their religion.

But yet the diſputes which we find amongſt them, as that of the fatality of events, did not at all touch the ſubſtance of their religion.

They no ſooner found the ſpirit of epicuriſme to creep in amongſt them, but they framed ſuch additions to their publick liturgy, as they thought moſt proper to eradicate, or at leaſt condemn that corruption.

I confeſs alſo, that the Phariſees and Doctors of their law had greatly alter'd their morality, in making their own explications (by the great authority which they had amongſt the people) to paſs for authentick: but yet this change and corruption in their morals as to practice, did not go ſo far as to aboliſh the laws themſelves, which were only wreſted from their true meaning. This was indeed a great corruption, but not ſuch a one as could make it to be no more the ſame religion.

So that we may boldly aſſert (which is a thing very important to our preſent purpoſe) That the ſtate and religion of the *Jews* have continued ſufficiently entire till the time of the appearing of the Meſſiah in the world, for their preſerving of whatſoever was neceſſary, *viz.* as well the books of the Old Teſtament, as the knowledge of thoſe oracles which foretold the coming of the Meſſiah, together with the knowledge of theſe principles, according to which the Prophets have ſpoken in their predictions concerning him.

THE PREFACE.

I HAVE ſhewn in my Reflexions upon the Book of *Geneſis*, that the facts of the Creation, and the promiſes of the Meſſiah, are truths not to be queſtioned, and that the idea's of this Meſſiah continued vigorouſly all the time that preceded the children of *Iſrael*'s going out of *Egypt*.

We have ſeen afterwards in the Remarks which I have made upon the Laws which God gave to *Moſes*, that it was the great deſign of God to keep men in the expectation of this Meſſiah, and to take care that they might certainly know him whenever he ſhould appear in the world.

I have taken notice in the third part of theſe Reflexions of the care which God took to give a great number of Oracles to explain particularly all the characters of this Meſſiah, the place and manner of his Birth, the principal circumſtances of his Life, Death, and Reſurrection, and to foretel the effuſion of the gifts of the Holy Ghoſt upon the Gentiles, their call to the Religion of the Meſſiah, and laſtly, the overthrow of the whole model of the Jewiſh religion and common-wealth, which was no longer of any uſe after the coming of the Meſſiah, and the calling of the Gentiles.

My preſent buſineſs is now to ſhew, That in the books of the *New Teſtament* we may find an exact accompliſhment of this whole deſign, wherein God had with ſo much care inſtructed the world ſo long before, and there is nothing more eaſie, if we will but take a little pains to read theſe books attentively, and to compare them with the model which God himſelf made, as we have hitherto deſcribed it.

To make this truth yet more evident, I think it will be neceſſary to do two or three things which ſeem to be very important for my preſent deſign.

And firſt, I am to obſerve that there appears a moſt perfect coherence between the idea's of the *Old Teſtament* and thoſe of the *New*, which is abſolutely neceſſary to ſhew that there is in theſe books a perfect unity of deſign, notwithſtanding the vaſt difference there is between the *Jews* who preſerve the *Old Teſtament*, and the *Chriſtians* who preſerve the *New*.

Secondly, I am to demonſtrate that the idea's of the Meſſiah were very ſtrong in the minds of the *Jews* at the very time that Jeſus Chriſt appeared in the world.

This

This was abſolutely neceſſary, that they might not have wherewith to accuſe thoſe who received Chriſt for the Meſſiah, of being deceived in their choice, for not having had the exact idea's of the Meſſiah which God had promiſed.

I ſhall upon this account ſhew in the third place, That when Jeſus Chriſt did appear in the world, the model which God had framed in the law of *Moſes*, whereby the Meſſiah might be plainly known, did then ſubſiſt in the manner wherein God had framed it.

After this I ſhall endeavour to ſhew by proofs, which are indeed unqueſtionable, That in examining all the characters which the Prophets gave, by which the Meſſiah might be known; we cannot conceive a more exact execution of God's deſign as to the Meſſiah, than that which we find in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, whereof the books of the *New Teſtament* have given us the hiſtory.

Laſtly, I ſhall ſhew clearly that this model which God had framed in giving the law, and in forming the common-wealth and religion of the *Jews* in ſo proper a manner, to make the Meſſiah certainly known, is not in being at this day; but that it was ſo deſtroyed by the total diſperſion of that people, that we ſhould not be able to know the Meſſiah if he ſhould now appear again in the world. And that indeed the principal events, which according to the oracles were to follow the coming of the Meſſiah, are already come to paſs in part, and do ſtill come to paſs every day.

I hope to evince theſe truths beyond all conteſt; indeed the bare reading of the books of the *New Teſtament* plainly diſcovers the coherence which they have with the books of the *Old*. It ſhews clearly that the idea's of the Meſſiah were at that time very ſtrong in the minds of the *Jews*, and it ſuppoſeth without any affectation that that model which God had made ſo neceſſary to diſtinguiſh the Meſſiah, ſtood at that time intire.

In particular, it is certain that the four Evangeliſts, by the relation of unqueſtionable matters of fact, have proved that Jeſus the ſon of *Mary* is the Meſſiah which God had promiſed.

Saint *Luke* ſhews in the *Acts of the Apoſtles* that after the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, and the effuſion of the gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, the Goſpel was preached to the heathens.

The epiſtles are a natural conſequence of this vocation of the heathens, and of the aboliſhing of the law of *Moſes* which the Apoſtles had undertaken. They unanimouſly conſpire to ſhew that God had reſolved to call the heathens to partake of ſalvation, that the *Jews* for the greateſt part ſhould be juſtly deprived thereof, becauſe they obſtinately rejected the Meſſiah. Several queſtions are examined, which aroſe either from the calling of the Gentiles, or from the aboliſhing of the ceremonial worſhip.

The ſucceſſion of the hiſtory of the Chriſtian church juſtifies, That after the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* all people imbraced the religion of Jeſus Chriſt, in receiving him for the Meſſiah whom God had promiſed to the Patriarchs, and to the *Jews*.

I ſhall reſume all theſe articles one by one, in that natural order in which I have propoſed them.

REFLEXIONS

REFLEXIONS

UPON THE

BOOKS

OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT,

TO

ESTABLISH THE TRUTH

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

CHAP. I.

That there appears a very juſt Connexion between the Idea's of the OLD TESTAMENT, *and thoſe of the* NEW, *the latter borrowing Light from the Former.*

AS it is not much the character of romances, even then when they are moſt tyed up to the rules of probability, to borrow either the ſtile or idea's of thoſe authors from whom they take their ſubject, ſo I ſuppoſe that in this my undertaking to ſhew that the *New Teſtament* is an exact accompliſhment of the *Old*, it is very important to make out, that at the firſt reading of the Goſpels and Apoſtoli-

cal Writings, one finds in them a perfect conformity of idea's, with the writings of the *Old Teſtament*.

One may to this purpoſe obſerve in general, That the Goſpel ſuppoſeth the Divine authority of the book of the Old Teſtament, as an unqueſtionable truth. The goſpels and epiſtles have the ſame coherence with the books of the law and Prophets, which the writings of the latter Prophets have with thoſe of the former, and which the books of all the Prophets together, have with the books of *Moſes*, and with the prophecies, laws and hiſtories which are contained therein.

One may take notice afterwards, That all the books of the *New Teſtament* have an eſſential relation to thoſe of the *Old*, in their moſt principal deſigns. I have ſhewed that their deſign was no other, than to raiſe men to expectations of the Meſſiah, and to paint *him* to the life, whom God had promiſed from the beginning of the world; and the only deſign of the *New Teſtament* is, to prove that the Meſſiah is come according to the Prophets. The firſt ſpeaks concerning the Meſſiah as expected, the latter as already come.

But we muſt proceed to a more particular view of this matter. I ſay then firſt of all, That the Chriſtians have the ſame object of their faith which the *Jews* had; this Jeſus Chriſt himſelf declares, where he ſaith; *This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.* Behold here the true character of the Chriſtian religion, as well as of the Jewiſh, to believe one only God, to own a Meſſiah, and to acknowledge that Jeſus Chriſt is he. The Jews agree with us in the two former articles, tho' they diſpute the laſt.

I ſay in the ſecond place, That the laws of the Goſpel, which regulate religion, and the conduct of particular perſons in that ſociety, are exactly the ſame with thoſe of the Old Teſtament. Jeſus Chriſt in his ſermon upon the mount, which contains an abridgment of his ethicks, had no other end but to reſtore the true ſenſe and meaning of thoſe laws God had given upon mount *Sinai*; and tho' in the matter of divorces, it ſeems oppoſite to that law wherein God had before permitted them, yet we may eaſily conceive that he began to abrogate thoſe orders and diſpenſations which were only given to make the Meſſiah known whenever he ſhould appear.

The prayer which Jeſus Chriſt taught his Apoſtles, is full of notions which reigned among the Jews, as ſeveral expoſitors have manifeſted. I ſhall content myſelf with alledging the inſtance of the petition for our daily bread, which has an evident regard to the manna which God gave the children of *Iſrael* in the wilderneſs for forty years.

We know alſo that the ſacraments of the baptiſm and the euchariſt, are originally Jewiſh ceremonies, which Jeſus Chriſt hath applied with a very little variation, to much more important ſubjects. Baptiſm was a waſhing which accompanied the ſacrifices and circumciſion of proſelytes. And the waſhing practiſed under the law of *Moſes*, ſignified that the proſelyte, who was admitted to the ſame, was reſolved to renounce his former courſes, and for the time to come to follow an oppoſite way of living, according to the rules preſcribed him by the Miniſters of heaven, after that they in the name of God had aſſured him of the remiſſion of his ſins.

The

The euchariſt was an appendix of the feaſt of the paſſover, which preſerved the memory of the ſufferings of the *Iſraelites* in *Egypt*, and the deliverance he afforded them, in puniſhing of the *Egyptians*. This ceremony did perpetuate the memory of that deliverance till the coming of the Meſſiah. Jeſus Chriſt hath ſubſtituted to this figure an inſtance of the curſe of God againſt the poſterity of *Cham*, the idea of his death, by which he hath communicated his bleſſing to all nations of the earth according to his promiſe. And he hath made it a more full and exact memorial of his death, which he would have us to conſider as the death of the true *Lamb*, *which takes away the ſins of the world*. As the old covenant was made in the blood of a lamb, ſo Jeſus Chriſt, with regard to the New Teſtament or covenant promiſed by *Jeremiah*, *Chap.* XXXI. ordains the celebrating the memorial of the blood he had ſpilt, *This is the New Teſtament in my blood*, &c. And laſtly, whereas the law ordained the commemoration of the paſchal lamb but once a year, Jeſus Chriſt ſeems to appoint a much more frequent celebration of the euchariſt, when he ſaith, *As oft as ye ſhall eat this bread*, &c. the reaſon of which, without doubt, is taken from the greatneſs of the benefit which his death confers upon us.

It is well worth our obſervation, That ordinarily the ſame prophetical idea's that are found in the *Old Teſtament* may be met with in the *New*. The book of the *Revelations* contains abundance of particulars ſet down in the prophecies of *Zachariah* and *Ezechiel*. Jeſus Chriſt himſelf purſues the idea's of the Prophet *Joel* in the XXIV of *Matthew*, when he ſets forth the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and afterwards he deſcribes the ſame according to the notions which *Daniel* gives us thereof.

Daniel foretels in the VII *Chapter* of his book, the deſtruction of the *Roman* monarchy by the Chriſtians, whom he ſtiles *The People of the moſt High*. St. *Paul* follows the ſame notion, 1 *Cor.* VI. 2. where he ſuppoſeth it as a known thing: *The Saints* (ſaith he) *ſhall judge the world*. And St. *John* in the XX of the *Revelations*, *verſe* 4. repreſents Satan bound, and the government put into the hands of believers.

It is alſo very remarkable, That the promiſes and threats of Jeſus Chriſt are expreſſed in terms borrowed from the *Old Teſtament*. Theſe words of Jeſus Chriſt, *He that hears my words, and believes in him that ſent me, hath eternal life, and ſhall not come into judgment*. &c. have not they a plain relation to *Adam*'s unbelief and diſobedience, to the judgment he underwent, and the puniſhment impoſed on him? Is it not from this ſpirit which penetrates both, that the *New Teſtament* ſo oft makes mention of a *new Canaan*, a *new Jeruſalem*, a *new name*, &c. and that glory is repreſented to us ſometimes under the notion of Paradiſe, ſometimes of a feaſt, where *Abraham* (who is called *The Father of the Faithful*) ſits at the upper end?

Eternal damnation is repreſented to us under the notion of the valley of *Hinnom*, of a lake burning with fire and brimſtone, with regard to the lake of *Sodom*, and to the place where the filth of *Jeruſalem* was wont to be burnt up and conſumed. 'Tis upon this account that believers are exhorted to *remember* Lot's *wife*, *Luke* IX. 62. and XVII. 32, and to depart from the midſt of the wicked, *Hebr.* XIII.

If we conſider the election of the Apoſtles, and of the ſeventy Diſciples, we ſhall find the reference they have to the heads of the twelve tribes, and to the ſeventy Elders whom *Moſes* choſe, to preſerve the memory of the ſeventy ſouls *Jacob* brought with him into *Egypt*. Theſe paſſages, *Ye ſhall ſit on twelve thrones*, and *your names are written in the book of life*: and the number of 144000, being the product of 12 times 12, by alluſion to the twelve tribes, do all borrow their light from thoſe ancient hiſtories.

Throughout the *New Teſtament* we find nothing but a continual alluſion to the ſtate of the Jews; all thoſe idea's of the *liberty of the Sons of God* do allude to the ceremony of their jubilee. The *firſt born* mentioned there, and the *kingdom of Prieſts*, are not to be underſtood but by caſting our eye on the *Old Teſtament*. If Jeſus Chriſt be called *the chief Corner Stone*, if *Peter* be called *a Stone or Rock*, Believers *living Stones*, and the Apoſtles *Foundations*, it is by way of alluſion to the manner in which the twelve princes or heads of the tribes did contribute towards the building of the temple, and to the manner of the building of it. If the children of *Zebedee* are called *Boanerges*, 'tis with reference to the ſecond of *Haggai*, *Yet once, and I will ſhake the heavens and the earth*. That the Heathens are deſcribed as a people *afar off*, and what is ſpoken concerning the *wall of partition*, hath a viſible reſpect to the *Gentiles*, being prohibited to enter into the holy place of the temple.

If I would inſtance in all the myſtical relations of the one volume to the other, I might ſay that there appears a ſingular conformity between them, even in thoſe things which ſeem moſt oppoſite. *Moſes* the firſt and great miniſter of the law, had a ſtammering ſpeech, *Zachary* the father of S. *John the Baptiſt* was ſtruck dumb, when he was to pronounce the ſolemn bleſſing to the people; whereas Jeſus Chriſt on the contrary has this character given of him, that *never man ſpake like him*. God ſaid at the beginning, *Encreaſe and multiply*, he repeats the ſame to *Noah*, in order to the propagation of mankind, and repleniſhing the earth; Jeſus Chriſt ſaith, *Go and teach all nations*; and the word is conſtantly repreſented to us as the ſeed of the regeneration, and baptiſm, as the laver or waſhing whereby we acquire a new birth. We ſee *Noah* receiving the dove into the ark with an olive branch, as a ſign of the peace of Heaven, and Jeſus Chriſt receives a like token.

Fire falls down from heaven on the ſacrifice of *Abel*, *Noah*, *Moſes*, *David*, *Solomon*, and *Elijah*, as a token that God accepted their offerings; and God ſends the ſame mark of his favour on the day of *Penteco*ſt, to declare that the ſacrifice of Jeſus Chriſt was moſt acceptable to him.

God had forbid the high prieſt to rend his clothes on any occaſion whatſoever, that rending of garments involving a myſtery, as appears from the hiſtory of *Jeroboam*; and yet we ſee, that the high prieſt rent his cloaths at the condemnation of our Saviour, and thereby violated for ever the authority of his prieſthood, whereas on the contrary we find the garments of our Lord and Saviour were left whole and entire, to ſignifie to us the eternity of his prieſthood. We ſee that the ear of *Malchus* the high prieſt's ſervant was cut off by S. *Peter*, and that Jeſus Chriſt reſtored it again, to ſhew that the ſynagogue had loſt the true faith, and Jeſus Chriſt alone was able to reſtore it. We ſee the holy place in the

temple

temple opened at the death of Chriſt, by the rending of the vail, which ſignified that the ceremonial law was then to loſe its force and authority.

But the obſervations already made are ſufficient to make out what I intend, without having recourſe to theſe myſteries; and I believe no man can make ſuch reflexions, without being perſwaded that ſo great a conformity of idea's, muſt neceſſarily imply a perfect unity of deſign; now it is impoſſible to ſuppoſe, that this unity of deſign ſhould be ſo conſtantly obſerved by different authors, who lived at ſuch a diſtance of times, places, and intereſts, without being convinced of a perpetual Divine guidance.

I acknowledge that in the *New Teſtament* there may be found ſome deciſions which ſeem wholly oppoſite to thoſe of the *Old*: for inſtance, we find there a total abrogation of the ceremonial law; but foraſmuch as all thoſe obſervations had no other uſe, but to diſtinguiſh the *Jews* from all other nations of the earth, and by this means to make the Meſſiah known to the *Jews* amongſt whom he was to be born; ſo it is obvious to conceive that all thoſe ceremonies were of courſe to be aboliſhed, after that the Meſſiah was come into the world, and that if we conſider things in this view, we ſhall find no contradiction at all between *Moſes*, who eſtabliſhed theſe ceremonies, and the Apoſtles who aboliſhed them.

But before we come to confirm theſe grounds, we muſt make it appear, that the idea's of the Meſſiah continued very freſh in the minds of the *Jews*, and this ſhall be the ſubject of the following chapter.

CHAP. II.

That the Idea's of the Meſſiah continued very freſh in the Minds of the Jews *at the Time of the Coming of our Saviour* Jesus Christ.

IT would be an eaſie matter for me here to ſhew that the idea's of the Meſſiah were lively in the minds of the *Jews* before the coming of Jeſus Chriſt. This appears from the fable which the Rabbies told *Origen*, concerning *Zedechiah*, and *Ahiab*, whom the king of *Babylon* burnt, for perſwading the Jewiſh women, that they were the perſons that were to conceive the Meſſiah. But I intend to make uſe of proofs of a different nature.

Now to prove that the notion of the Meſſiah was very freſh in the minds of the *Jews*, we need only take notice, that the promiſe of God concerning him, was the firſt, the moſt important, and repeated with the greateſt aſſiduity in the books of the Prophets, and conſequently it employed them the moſt: God having for this reaſon obliged them to read the books of *Moſes* every ſabbath, to ſing the *Pſalms* of *David*, and

to examine the writings of the Prophets, where the promiſe of the Meſſiah was a thouſand times repeated.

We may add a great deal of light to this obſervation, if we conſider that the circumſtances of the *Jews* at that time, engaged them to give more diligent heed to what the Prophets had declared; and by weighing ſeveral matters of fact ſet down in the Goſpel, to ſhew the univerſal effect of the lively impreſſion of this notion of the Meſſiah on the minds of the *Jews*.

Without doubt the eſtate of the *Jews* at that time, being equally oppreſt by the power of the *Romans*, and that of *Herod*, could not but put them upon a careful examining of the promiſes, which God had ſo often vouchſafed them concerning the Meſſiah; and the rather becauſe God had often repreſented to them the kingdom of the Meſſiah as a temporal kingdom, which was to deliver them from the power of their enemies.

This appears very evident in the Goſpel on ſeveral occaſions. We find that the people of *Jeruſalem* and *Herod* were troubled at the news of the birth of Jeſus, as that which would probably cauſe great troubles and deſolations before the kingdom of the Meſſiah could ſubdue the *Romans* as well as *Herod*: one ſee's that the multitudes would have taken Chriſt and proclaimed him their king, and ſubmitted themſelves to him as the true Meſſiah: one ſee's that Chriſt's own Diſciples, both before and after his death, talked agreeably to theſe popular idea's. What elſe can we make of that paſſage of the mother of *James* and *John*, when ſhe begs for them the chief places in his kingdom? When the Apoſtles diſpute which of them ſhould be the greateſt, was it not an effect of the ſame cauſe? Did not the Apoſtles, when they went to *Emaus*, diſcourſe at the ſame rate? Did not they expreſs themſelves with much grief and trouble, before they were inſtructed in the moſt ſublime truths of the Goſpel? *But we truſted that it had been he which ſhould have redeemed* Iſrael.

It is alſo very obſervable, That *John the Baptiſt* appears and adminiſters the ſacrament of baptiſm at this time: this his practice gave the *Jews* occaſion to take him for the Meſſiah; but what ground had they to think ſo? ſurely from what they had read in *Ezechiel*, *Chap.* XXXVI. *verſe* 25. And indeed, when the great councel of the *Jews* deputed ſome perſons to him, they charged them to know of him whether he were the Meſſiah, or no, and if not, why he exerciſed a function, which that prophecy ſeem'd to appropriate to the Meſſiah himſelf, in calling him the Angel of the Covenant.

The ſame truth may alſo be collected from what is related to us concerning the opinions of the *Jews* about the perſon of Chriſt; *whom*, ſaith our Saviour, *do people ſay I am?* And the Apoſtles anſwer, That ſome ſaid he *was John the Baptiſt*, others *Jeremiah*, others *Elias*, and others again *that Prophet*, that is to ſay the Meſſiah, who is ſo called by way of excellence in the XVIII. of *Deuteronomy*. And we find that when Jeſus Chriſt ſtil'd himſelf *the Son of Man*, the multitudes eaſily conceived that he alluded to the ſeventh of *Daniel*, where the Meſſiah is ſo called.

We perceive alſo from many other places in the Goſpel, That the multitudes were very well acquainted with thoſe paſſages in the *Old Teſtament*,

tament, which were commonly applyed to the Meſſiah: *the Meſſiah, when he appears*, ſay they, *will he do greater ſigns than this man doth?* Others are offended becauſe Jeſus Chriſt was of *Nazareth*, arguing from thence that he could not be the Meſſiah: others maintain that when the Meſſiah ſhould come, it would not be known whence he was; and others again aſſerted, that the Meſſiah was to continue for ever. All which is an evident ſign that the idea's of the Meſſiah were very familiar among the *Jews*.

This muſt have been ſo of neceſſity, becauſe the *Samaritans* themſelves were poſſeſt with the ſame idea's, tho' they had not ſo great an extent of light as the *Jews* had. They did not indeed altogether reject the writings of the Prophets, but rather ſtudied them with care, their animoſity againſt the *Jews*, and their jealouſie upon account of the promiſe, of the place of the temple, and other things in queſtion, do manifeſtly ſhew that the characters of the Meſſiah were known to them, and that they were exactly informed in that whole matter.

One ought alſo to take notice, That as the Apoſtles call that *the fulneſs of time*, becauſe the times ſet down by the Prophets were almoſt expired, and the ſcepter was already departed from *Judah*, the weeks of *Daniel* were ended, and the kingdoms of *Syria* and *Egypt* were overturn'd; ſo there were ſeveral good men, who were filled with an expectation of the Meſſiah. *Anna* and *Simeon* are repreſented to us, as thoſe who by their ſtudy of the Holy Scriptures, had diſcover'd that the time of the coming of the Meſſiah was near at hand, much in the ſame manner as *Daniel* is repreſented to us to have learnt from the prophecy of *Jeremiah*, that the captivity was almoſt expired.

I ſhall add one argument more which ſeems beyond exception, That many perſons were found about the time of Jeſus Chriſt, who were either drawn by others into an opinion of their being the Meſſiah, or who of themſelves deſired to be accounted ſo. Thus we are told that the flatterers of *Herod* the Great gave him the title of *Meſſiah*. Of this number were *Theudas* and *Judas Gaulonites*, with ſome others: thus alſo ſoon after ſome applyed the prophecies concerning the Meſſiah to *Veſpaſian* the emperour, becauſe he had been choſen in the eaſt. This is atteſted by *Joſephus*, *Tacitus*, and *Suetonius*, who aſſure us, that the notion of the promiſed Meſſiah, as of a great king, was very common in the eaſt, and not unknown in the weſt.

We know that under the emperour *Adrian Barchochab* was the cauſe of a terrible ſedition, by making the *Jews* believe that he was the Meſſiah: and we cannot be ignorant how many ſuch like impoſtors have been ſince, who have abuſed the credulity of the *Jews*, even until *Sabatai Sevi* (*a*), who deluded them about one and twenty years ſince.

Laſtly, we cannot but think that this idea of the Meſſiah was always freſh among the *Jews*, becauſe we find that from that time they have continually diſputed with the Chriſtians about this matter; becauſe they tell us of two Meſſiah's, one the ſon of *Judah*, and the other the ſon of *Joſeph*; and becauſe in all places of the world whither they are ſcattered, they ſpeak of the Meſſiah in their Commentaries on the Scriptures, in

(*a*) *Rycaut.* Turk. Hiſt. vol. 2. p. 174, &c.

in their ſermons, in their publick prayers, and their common converſation.

Surely if any time can be ſuppoſed, wherein they might have loſt their knowledge and diſtinct hope of the Meſſiah, it muſt be ſince the time appointed for his coming is expired, when by the Chriſtians inſulting over their vain expectations, they have been oblig'd (finding themſelves diſappointed by prophetical calculations) to ſet up that raſh maxim, *Curſed is he that computes the times*. And therefore it is evident, that theſe notions were much more lively in them, when their hopes were well grounded, and when they might pretend to ſee them accompliſhed.

It is no leſs certain, that the model appointed by God, by means of which the Meſſiah might be certainly known, did ſtill ſubſiſt in the ſame manner as God at firſt had formed it: but that I may give a full light to this capital truth; I ſhall tye my ſelf to conſider the ſeveral arguments for it diſtinctly; and ſhall begin with thoſe which ſhew that the common-wealth of the *Jews* did ſubſiſt according to the Divine model; and then proceed to others which demonſtrate, that God had therein preſerved all the diſtinctions neceſſary to his deſign.

CHAP. III.

That the Common-Wealth of the JEWS *did ſtill ſubſiſt, and follow the Model which* GOD *had formed, in Order to the certain Knowing of the* MESSIAH.

THERE are two things which ſeem to contradict this propoſition; the one is the overturning of the Jewiſh State, the other is the corruption of their religion; but it is eaſie to remove both theſe difficulties.

For the overturning of the ſtate of the *Jews*, did not draw along with it that of the Scripture, and the laws on which it was founded, and afterwards governed. Wherefore the caſe of this republick is not the ſame with that of *Athens* or *Lacedemon*, which at preſent ſubſiſt no where, but in books, becauſe there are no people now that follow the laws of the ancient legiſlators of *Sparta* or *Athens*.

But on the contrary, we find the *Jews* in all parts of the world, keeping theſe laws with great carefulneſs, ſtudying them with the greateſt application, and flattering themſelves that God will one day re-eſtabliſh them in *Judea*, which they expect by means of the Meſſiah, whom God at firſt promiſed to them.

'Tis now above 1600 years that they have been ſcattered throughout the world, and yet we find not that their condition has made them change their meaſures or hopes; and tho' they have already been deceived by a great

great number of falſe Meſſiahs, yet do not they for all that look upon the condition of their common-wealth as irrecoverable.

Now, if during ſo long a ſeries of ages, they have kept their laws with ſo much carefulneſs, if they ſtill religiouſly obſerve all thoſe laws which could be kept without the bounds of the holy land; who ſees not but that in all probability they muſt have kept them more exactly at the time of Jeſus Chriſt, and before his coming, when they could keep them with much more eaſe than ſince that time, and that for many conſiderable reaſons.

For firſt, Their diſperſion then was in one only nation, whereas now they are ſcattered amongſt Heathens, Chriſtians, and Mahometans.

2. They had then Prophets who exhorted them to the obſervance of theſe laws, which now they have wanted for ſo many ages.

3. They had often princes that were very favourable to them, ſuch as *Cyrus* and *Darius*, who ordered that ſacrifices ſhould be offered for themſelves, in the temple at *Jeruſalem*; and *Pompey* afterwards had the ſame inclinations for them; whereas ſince the time of their diſperſion, they have ſcarcely met with any one prince that has been favourable to them, if we except *Julian* the apoſtate, who from an effect of his hatred againſt the Chriſtians, did vainly ſtrive to re-eſtabliſh them.

4. They had a temple to which the whole ſtate of their republick was fixed. *Herod* about the time of our Saviour had moſt magnificently repaired it, whereas now for ſo many ages they have neither temple nor altar.

5. They had high-prieſts amongſt them, that were entruſted with the ſovereign power, and were kings of their nation, whereas now they have neither king nor prince of their faith.

6. Their laws being tranſlated into *Greek* ſince the time of *Ptolemy Philadelphus*, it gave occaſion to an extraordinary jealouſie between the *Jews* of *Egypt*, who had the text of the Scripture in *Greek*, and between thoſe of *Jeruſalem*, who had it in *Hebrew*, whereas now all this is altogether ceaſed, all the *Jews* now for many ages making uſe only of the *Hebrew* text.

Since therefore we find that they without Prophets, without king, out of their own country, *&c.* have obſerved theſe laws for ſo many ages, notwithſtanding their diſperſion throughout all places, and amongſt all ſorts of people; how much rather may we conceive they did ſo ſince the time of *Ezra*, who placed the books of the *Old Teſtament* in the order in which we have them at this day? There are only 542 years, from the time of the return of their captivity, which happened in the year 3468, to the birth of Chriſt; and but 259 years from their return, to the tranſlation of the 70, and we know that above 1600 years are paſt ſince their general diſperſion.

Moreover, it appears that the *Romans* had ſo well preſerved the form of the Jewiſh government from *Pompey*'s time, as well as that of their religion, that a *Roman* general ſent to demand a kind of permiſſion of the *Jews*, to let him paſs with the *Roman* eagles through *Syria*. We know that thoſe eagles were never ſet up at *Jeruſalem*, but it was at a time when a *Roman* commander intended to ſtir up the *Jews* to ſedition,

and

and by that means to make the emperour their enemy. Yea, we find that tho' the *Romans* reſerved to themſelves the power of the ſword, yet they permitted to the *Jews* the judgment of zeal, againſt thoſe whom they called Hereticks, whom they tore to pieces, to execute the rigour of the law.

If we find that a *Roman* proconſul would not concern himſelf with queſtions of their law ariſing without the bounds of their own country, how much rather may we judge that they enjoy'd an entire liberty within *Judea?* And indeed we find the prieſts ſending their commiſſioners to *Damaſcus* (*b*) againſt the Chriſtians, without doubt with deſign to execute the law againſt impoſtors. S. *Paul* was beaten ſeveral times with forty ſtripes ſave one, which could not be upon any other pretence, but to obey the law in that matter.

Theſe proofs are ſufficient to make out that the commonwealth of the *Jews* ſubſiſted ſtill in the ſame manner as God inſtituted it.

And as for what concerns the overthrow of their religion, as God had interwoven the laws that regulated it, with thoſe of their government, ſo that their religion was nothing elſe but a religious policy; it is evident that their government continuing at the time of Jeſus Chriſt, we cannot doubt, but that their religion, notwithſtanding the corruption which the Phariſees and traditionary *Jews*, whom Chriſt continually cenſures, had introduced, did ſtill continue pure enough, to anſwer the model which God had framed.

They rejected the *Samaritans*, as appears from the IV of S. *John*, and looked upon them as Hereticks, having no commerce with them.

They lived in a perfect alienation from the Heathen; 'tis with this S. *Peter* begins his diſcourſe to the aſſembly at the houſe of *Cornelius*, *Acts* X. 28.

They lived in an exact obſervance of the ſolemn feaſts which God had preſcribed them, *viz.* the paſſover, pentecoſt, the feaſt of expiation and of tabernacles.

They obſerved the feaſts which their anceſtors had joyn'd to theſe upon extraordinary occaſions, as that of the dedication, that of *Lots*, and ſome faſts which they kept then, as they do to this day. This appears by the hiſtory of the Goſpel, and by the Acts of the Apoſtles.

They aſſiſted at theſe ſolemn feſtivals with much regularity.

They did not till their ground in the ſeventh year, according to God's command, which made the Heathen princes which were over them, to releaſe them from paying any tribute that year, as may be ſeen in *Joſephus* and other authors.

They taught the law in their ſynagogues, and that every ſabbath day.

They were ſo ſcrupulous in their obſervation of the ſabbath, that they accuſed our Saviour for healing the ſick on that day.

It appears that lepers were ſequeſtred, and that they obſerved the diſtinction of the ſeveral kinds of leproſie, according to the law of *Moſes*.

We find by the hiſtory of the *Gadarenes*, that ſwine were looked upon as unclean beaſts.

It

(*b*) Acts ix. 4.

It is certain that they paid the tribute which was appointed for the uſe of the temple, according to the law of *Moſes*, and the re-eſtabliſhment of that cuſtom, which we find II *Chron.* XXIV. 5. *Joſephus* (*c*) tells us that this practiſe was continued till the deſtruction of the temple. We meet with the ſame in *Tacitus*, and other Heathen authors of that time.

I acknowledge that at the ſame time they were extreamly corrupt in their doctrines, with which Chriſt upbraids the Phariſees and Saduces: but this corruption reſpected rather their morals, than the externals of their religion; as appears plainly from hence, that Jeſus Chriſt upbraids the Phariſees with their tithing mint and cummin, that is, with their obſervance of outward niceties, whilſt they neglected the very eſſentials of piety.

They held that Heathens could not paſs for their neighbours, from whence it would follow, that God did not forbid them to bear falſe witneſs againſt a Heathen. Hence alſo they concluded that it was lawful for them to kill their enemies, and this fomented their hatred and animoſity againſt all other nations. It was on this account that the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt marvelled that he talked with a *Samaritan* woman.

Their deciſions concerning adultery were no leſs corrupt, which they declared to be no ſin, ſo long as it did not proceed to the outward act; which opinion of theirs was more groſs than that of many Heathens, who had a truer idea of the purity of heart which God requires of us, as well as that of the body. But yet this did not altogether deſtroy their religion, tho' it obſcured the excellency and ſublimity thereof.

As for the Saduces, beſides that their errours were only ſpeculative, amongſt the greateſt part of them, it is certain that what the Goſpel ſaith of their denying the exiſtence of ſouls and ſpirits, and the doctrine of the reſurrection, muſt be underſtood with ſome qualification, as the learned have ſolidly proved, and amongſt others Dr. *Lightfoot* on the Goſpels.

And without repeating thoſe things which ſecur'd the preſervation of their ſtate, and which alſo viſibly tended to the preſerving of their religion, I ſhall only obſerve, That the *Jews* at this day, with very little difference, are found in the ſame practices and opinions, as to their religion, which they had at the time of our Saviour.

Seeing then, that after ſo long a time of ſixteen hundred years, we find no greater change in their belief (though their traditions are conſiderably encreaſed, the rules whereof they have infinitely multiplyed, and thereby encreaſed this corruption) how can it be imagin'd that the religion of the *Jews* was wholly loſt, or had no being at the time of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

Let this therefore be eſtabliſhed as a certain truth, That the commonwealth of the *Jews* ſubſiſting entirely, it was eaſie to know, whether the diſtinctions which were neceſſary to diſcover and make known the Meſſiah, were ſtill found in the ſtate of the *Jews* and their religion. This is that I am now going to make out.

CHAP. IV.

(*c*) Antiq. xviii. ch, xii.

CHAP. IV.

That all the Diſtinctions neceſſary for diſcovering of the MESSIAH, *ſtill continued in the State of the* JEWS *at the Time of our* LORD.

I DO not know whether any man can deny that circumciſion, which is one of the principal marks of the *Jews*, was practiſed at that time; if any one ſhould dare to diſpute this truth, we need only to repreſent to him, that the main diſpute between the firſt Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt and the *Jews*, was about the obſervation of this ceremony.

Neither were the *Jews* only obſtinate in this belief, but we find alſo that thoſe who firſt embraced the Chriſtian religion, maintained that the Heathens themſelves ought to ſubmit to the yoke of circumciſion, before they could enter into the Divine covenant, and enjoy the priviledges of Gods people, whom circumciſion diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of the world.

One ſee's that tho' God ſcattered the ten tribes, yet ſome of them ſtill remained in *Paleſtine*, and were diſtinctly known as ſuch. This appears from the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, where mention is made of a widow of the tribe of *Aſher*, and S. *Paul* boaſts of his being a *Benjamite*.

They upbraided *Herod*, notwithſtanding he was their king, with his being an *Edomite*, and not originally a *Jew*.

One ſee's that about *Tyre* and *Sidon* there remained ſtill a diſtinct knowledge of the *Canaanites*.

It is known that *Galilee* was leſs eſteemed than *Judea*, becauſe many of the *Gentiles* were ſettled there, by which means the *Jews* of that province were obliged to ſome commerce with them, from which thoſe who lived more diſtinct, thought that they had a right to undervalue thoſe that were ſettled in *Galilee*.

One may alſo boldly aſſert, That all places were ſtill diſtinctly known to what tribe they did belong. Thus it is obſerved that *Capernaum* was in the borders of *Naphtali* and *Zebulun*, that *Bethlehem* was in the tribe of *Juda*, which is related as a thing publickly known.

It is known that the prieſts ſtill poſſeſs the cities which *Joſhua* had aſſigned to them. *Zacharias* the father of *John the Baptiſt* dwelt at *Hebron* (*d*), a city belonging to the prieſts in the tribe of *Juda*.

One ſee's that even the *Samaritan* woman had a diſtinct knowledge of ſome famous places in the Holy Land, as *Jacob*'s Well, and the poſſeſſion which he gave to his ſon *Joſeph*, and that thoſe of her religion, took a prejudice againſt the *Jews*, becauſe *Jacob* had built an altar at *Sichem*.

One ſee's that they kept up the practiſe of redeeming their firſt-born, which at this day is ſtill obſerved by the *Jews*.

As alſo the practiſe of polygamy, which was ſo common amongſt them, that S. *Paul* thought himſelf obliged to forbid the ſame to the paſtors of the

(*d*) Joſh. xxi. 10, 11.

the Chriſtian church, that he might aboliſh it by little and little amongſt thoſe that embraced the doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt.

One ſee's from the nineteenth of S. *Matthew*, that divorces were publickly practiſed amongſt them, as they are to this day.

If one makes any reflexion upon the objection the Sadduces made to our Saviour concerning the woman that ſucceſſively had ſeven brothers for her huſbands, we ſhall perceive that the deſire of poſterity being predominant amongſt them, was the cauſe of the continuance of this cuſtom, which began in the time of the Patriarch *Judah*.

We have elſewhere taken notice of the extream carefulneſs of the *Jews*, in preſerving the marks of their daughters virginity, which has conſtantly continued down ſince the coming of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

The Goſpel, which informs us that the *Jews* were deprived of the power of the ſword, doth notwithſtanding ſufficiently ſignifie to us, not only the extream horrour which the *Jews* had conceived againſt adultery; (thus we find Jeſus Chriſt upbraiding the Phariſees, that adulterers, that is the greateſt of ſinners, entred into the kingdom of heaven before them;) but alſo that the laws againſt adulterers and adultereſſes were ſeverely executed.

In ſhort, one ſee's that by a judgment of zeal, as they call it, they brought a woman to our Saviour which was taken in adultery, before they went about to ſtone her; for one ought to know that the law only ſubjected young women, who were defiled after a contract, to that ſort of puniſhment, becauſe after they were once contracted they were reputed the wives of thoſe to whom they were betrothed; and ſuch an one was ſhe of whom we read in the eighth ch. of S. *John*, and not a perſon actually married, whoſe puniſhment, according to the law, was to be ſtrangled.

One ſee's that S. *Paul* ſuppoſeth, That the law which ſubjected a virgin to the will of her father, and gave him power to make void her vows at pleaſure, was ſtill in force.

I will not mention here what the ancients tell us of the diſtinction which they ſay was made between virgins and married women, as well in the temple, as in their ſynagogues; I ſhall only ſay, that this their tradition is not without ground.

It is known that the order eſtabliſhed by *David* for exerciſing the prieſtly functions was exactly obſerved by them: *Zacharias* was of the courſe of *Abia*, which was the eighth in order, as is mentioned I *Chron.* XXIV. 11. and he offered incenſe according to the law, ſet down *Exod.* XXX. *verſe* 7, 8.

One ſee's that the *Jews* would not ſuffer the dead bodies to hang upon the croſs after ſunſet, according to what we find was practis'd at the time of *Joſhua*, in purſuance of that law which we find *Deut.* XXI. *verſe* 23.

I only mention theſe particulars now, intending hereafter, that I may avoid tedious repetitions, to enlarge more expreſly, when I ſhall come to ſhew, as to every article, the exact accompliſhment of the ancient oracles concerning the Meſſiah, in the perſon of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; together with the uſe of theſe diſtinctions which bar any other, except

except Jesus Christ, from attributing that title to himself, and from abusing the credulity of the *Jews*.

It would be an easie matter for me to make a numerous list of these characters, according to all the different oracles which God gave to the *Jews* on this subject, and to justifie the exact fulfilling of them in the person of Jesus Christ. And indeed it was not without cause that God furnished his people with so great a number of prophecies upon this head, his design being thereby to give us such solid grounds for our faith, by granting to it all these supports, that nothing might be able to shake it.

But because all of them may be referred to certain heads, and that an explication of the chief of them is sufficient to illustrate the rest, I shall stop there now.

I begin therefore with the character of the time in which the Messiah was to appear, and in which Jesus Christ did actually come into the world. And it being utterly impossible for any man to choose the time of his birth, any more than to choose an illustrious fore-runner, or a certain place where, or a certain family of which he is to be born, and much less of a virgin for his mother; these characters may satisfie us, That all those that ever pretended to the title of the Messiah, could not reasonably do it.

CHAP. V.

That the Time pointed out by the Prophets for the Coming of the Messiah, *is the very Time in which* Jesus Christ *appeared to the World.*

I HAVE made it appear in the third part of these Reflexions, That the oracle of *Jacob*, Gen. XLIX. 10. *The sceptre shall not depart from* Judah, *nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until* Shiloh *come*, contains a formal character of the time in which our Saviour was to appear. I am therefore at present to shew that the *Jews* at that time had wholly lost the authority of which they had been possessed for so many ages, which will most evidently appear from these four Reflexions on the history of the Gospel it self.

The first is on the birth of Jesus Christ, which happened precisely at the time when *Augustus* had ordered that all the subjects of the *Roman* empire should be enrolled; when we find that *Joseph* and the Blessed Virgin went to *Bethlehem*, their own city, to list their names in the register of the *Roman* magistrate, which is an authentick proof of the servitude of that people to the *Romans*.

It will not be amiss here to take notice, first, Of *Moses* his numbring the people by Divine authority: secondly, Of the numbring which *David* undertook, and for which he was exemplarily punished by God. Now as God caused the people to be numbred, to shew that they were

all his ſubjects, and as *David* numbred them with the ſame reſpect, ſo we muſt conſider this action of *Auguſtus*, was a publick teſtimony of his ſoveraignty over the *Jews*, who were ſubdued by *Pompey*.

When *Tertullian* appealed to the publick regiſters of the *Roman* empire; in his apologetick addreſſed to the *Roman* magiſtrate, who reſided at *Carthage*, he gave a ſufficient evidence that we have no reaſon to ſuſpect the relation of the Evangeliſts. One may joyn to this the manner of the relation of theſe facts which the Evangeliſts give us; as for inſtance in the baptiſm of our Lord, they determine the years in which they were done, not only by the year of the high prieſt, but alſo by thoſe of *Auguſtus* and *Tiberius*, &c.

The ſecond reflexion may be made upon the character of one of the Apoſtles of Jeſus Chriſt, *Levi* or *Matthew*; who before our Saviour made choice of him was a publican, and it ſeems as if our Saviour had on purpoſe taken him from that employ, to be one of his Diſciples, to give a real inſtance, and ſuch a one as went every where along with him, that the *Jews* by paying tribute to the *Roman* empire had wholly loſt their temporal authority, which was to continue till the coming of the Meſſiah.

Here alſo may be made a third reflexion, which is very natural, upon a paſſage related by the Evangeliſts. They come and aſk our Saviour, Whether it were lawful to yield obedience to the *Romans*? For ſince God had choſen this people, and had given them judges and princes of his own chooſing, they had always an extream averſion for any foreign domination: of this we have an illuſtrious example at the time of the ſiege of *Jeruſalem*, when notwithſtanding the remonſtrances by *Jeremy*, yet they could not conſent to ſubmit. This is that with which they are upbraided, *Ezra* IV. *verſe* 19. neither were they more content with this their ſtate of bondage, at the time of our Saviour; and ſome of their zealots took this occaſion to tempt our Saviour, that they might make him odious, which ſide ſoever he ſhould take. Their queſtion is, *Whether it be lawful to pay tribute to* Ceſar? To which he anſwers with a Divine wiſdom; *Render to* Ceſar *the things which are* Ceſars, *and unto God the things that are Gods*; which words being joyned with the money that he made them produce, which was ſtampt with the emperours image, do evidently ſhew that the *Romans* were ſoveraign lords in *Judea*: it is known that the coyning of money is the undoubted mark of the ſoveraignty of that prince who makes it paſs for current.

But if we muſt give ſome further light to the foregoing reflexions, we need only obſerve the manner of our Saviour's ſuffering, as it is deſcribed to us. The *Jews* do agree, as may be ſeen in the *Jeruſalem Talmud* (*e*), that criminal judgment was taken away from them forty years before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; and the Goſpel ſuppoſeth the ſame thing; the *Jews* did not put Jeſus Chriſt to death, but they carried him to *Pilate*, and demanded that he might be crucified. When *Pilate* ſaid, *Shall I crucifie your king?* They anſwer, *We have no other king but* Ceſar, which confeſſion was the confeſſion of the whole Jewiſh nation, who were aſſembled at the feaſt of paſſover. In ſhort, one ſees that accordingly the *Roman* magiſtrate paſt ſentence upon him. He was

(*e*) *Sanhedr.* fol. 24. 2.

was ſcourged before they led him to be crucified, which was a puniſhment amongſt the *Romans*. His body is not taken from the croſs but by permiſſion from *Pilate*; and the *Roman* ſouldiers are thoſe dogs, that is, prophane Heathens who encloſed him, and tormented him, according to the deſcription which *David* has made *Pſalm* XXII.

The *Jews* have here but one anſwer to make, which God's former dealing with that people ſeems ſomewhat to countenance; which is, That as their ſeventy years captivity under the *Babylonian* empire did not hinder the differring of the accompliſhment of that prophecy of the *ſcepters not departing from* Judah, for ſome centuries after the ſaid captivity; ſo neither is it neceſſary to ſuppoſe that the Meſſiah was to ſucceed immediately upon the ending of the kingdom of the *Maccabee*'s, and upon the loſs of their liberty under *Pompey*.

But here is a very great difference: for firſt, during the Babyloniſh captivity, God ſtill preſerved amongſt them ſome form of government, the great lords of the country being chiefly carried away captives, whilſt the pooreſt and moſt miſerable were left behind.

Secondly, the captivity laſted only 70 years, whereas this laſt diſperſion hath laſted above 1600.

Thirdly, the firſt captivity did not at all aboliſh thoſe neceſſary marks whereby the lawful lords of *Judea* might be diſtinguiſhed: thoſe that were of the tribe of *Juda*, as well as thoſe of other tribes, were very well known, tho' they were not in poſſeſſion of the kingdom; whereas now every thing is confounded amongſt them; and if one looks into Chriſtian records, he may find that many of the kindred of Jeſus Chriſt were put to death, becauſe they could pretend to the throne of *Judea*.

Moreover, during the captivity of *Babylon*, they had Prophets amongſt them who expreſly foretold the end of it, whereas nothing of that kind has yet been ſince the laſt deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, ſince which time no Prophet has appeared amongſt them, that advantage being transferred to the Chriſtians, ſome of which, who next ſucceeded our Saviour, did foretel the moſt remarkable events that were to follow to the end of the world.

But if any one ſhould be ſo nice as to call in queſtion the reaſons of the difference here alledged; at leaſt the *Jews* will find nothing to object againſt the prophecy of *Daniel*, concerning the weeks at the end of which the Meſſiah was to appear, and afterwards to be cut off. In ſhort, if it be true that Jeſus Chriſt was born under the empire of *Auguſtus*, it is no leſs certain that he entred upon his miniſtry in the fifteenth year of *Tiberius*, and was crucified the nineteenth year of his reign, that is in the midſt of the four hundred eighty ſeventh year from the twentieth year of *Artaxerxes*, that is before the end of the laſt week pointed out by *Daniel*, as I have ſhewed in the eighth chapter of the third part of this book.

CHAP. VI.

CHAP. VI.

That Jesus Christ *had preciſely ſuch a Fore-Runner as the Prophets had deſcribed to precede the* Messiah.

ONE will eaſily judge that it was agreeable to the greatneſs of the Meſſiah, and the contemptible ſtate wherein he was to appear to the world, that he ſhould have a forerunner. Accordingly we find *Iſaiah* expreſſing himſelf in his manner, the year of the world 3292, almoſt 700 years before the birth of our Saviour. *Malachy* had expreſly foretold the ſame in his prophecy, about 420 years before his appearance. If this be once granted, it is eaſie to conceive that the ſon of a prieſt, living without any worldly ſplendour, and dying a violent death, tho' very glorious for him, was a proper forerunner to that Jeſus, who himſelf was to be crucified.

Our buſineſs therefore is to enquire whether the characters which the Prophets give to the forerunner of the Meſſiah, do agree with *John the Baptiſt*, in whom the Chriſtians maintain that this prophecy of *Malachy* was fulfilled. This may be eaſily made out.

Firſt, *John the Baptiſt* was miraculouſly conceived at a time when his parents could not promiſe themſelves any ſuch thing: the Angel *Gabriel*, who had declared to *Daniel* the coming of the Meſſiah, by pointing out to him the number of weeks, was the meſſenger of the conception of this forerunner of the Meſſiah. Several things paſſed at his birth, and at the time when they gave him his name, which were very ſtrange, and which could not but be generally known, as well becauſe of the accident which happened to *Zacharias* in the temple, as of his quality, being a prieſt.

Secondly, the extraordinary life which S. *John* led, being a *Nazarite*, ought to be carefully conſidered. He liv'd in a ſolitary place, as the Prophet *Elijah* did before him.

Thirdly, his preaching alſo had the character of that ancient Prophet, being thundring as his was; he neither ſpared great men, nor thoſe who had the reputation of the greateſt ſanctity, as the Phariſees particularly, whoſe pride and hypocriſy he touched to the quick.

Fourthly, he ſet forth the coming of the Meſſiah as at the door; *The kingdom of heaven*, ſaid he, *is at hand*; alluding to the ſeventh of *Daniel*, where the kingdom of the Meſſiah is repreſented as a kingdom which was to come down from heaven, whereas the former empires had their riſe from the earth.

In ſhort, nothing could be more illuſtrious than the miniſtry of this great man.

He baptized publickly for the ſpace of one year, ſuch as came to him, ſolemnly engaging them to repentance, in hopes of the ſuddain appearance of the Meſſiah. This ceremony, which was an imitation of their cuſtom of initiating proſelytes in the Jewiſh religion, was plainly an eſſay to eſtabliſh a new religion, or at leaſt to reform thoſe corruptions which time had introduced into the Jewiſh religion.

In a word, we find him ſo generally followed, that the great councel of the *Jews* thought fit to ſend deputies to him, to know whether he were not the Meſſiah they expected: this great man was ſo far from abuſing the great credit he had gain'd, that he ſolemnly proteſted, That he was only the forerunner of the Meſſiah, who was already come, but was as yet concealed in the midſt of them.

His glory became ſo illuſtrious, that it ſtirr'd up jealouſie in the mind of *Herod*, who caſt him into priſon, and at laſt cauſed his head to be cut off in the caſtle of *Macherom*, to ſatisfie the lewd *Herodias*, whoſe marriage, or rather inceſt, with *Herod* he had reproved.

Before S. *John* was beheaded, he ſends his Diſciples to Jeſus Chriſt, to inform himſelf whether he were the Meſſiah; which our Saviour proves to them by the miracles which he wrought in their preſence, and by the teſtimony of the Prophet *Iſaiah*, which S. *John* had before alledged as a proof of his call.

All theſe facts were ſo illuſtrious, and ſo well known, that S. *John* conſtantly paſſed for a great Prophet amongſt the *Jews*, the Phariſees themſelves not daring to queſtion it: he received publick deputations from the *Jews*, who demanded the reaſon of his miniſtry, and he himſelf ſent one to Jeſus Chriſt, that his Diſciples might be acquainted with him, and that they might give him a ſecond publick teſtimony; and laſt of all he dies a glorious martyr for his purity, after he had made a vaſt number of Diſciples, who were ſo well diſperſed in all places, that S. *Luke* tells us in the *Acts*, that ſome of them were found in *Aſia*, who received the Goſpel and the gifts of the Spirit, in which they had been as it were initiated already by the baptiſm of S. *John*.

It appears afterwards that S. *John* was look'd upon as the forerunner of the Meſſiah; Jeſus Chriſt ſaith he was the greateſt of all the Prophets; and when *Herod* heard of the reputation of Jeſus Chriſt, he ſuppoſed that S. *John* was raiſed from the dead.

The *Jews* not conceiving that *John the Baptiſt* was the forerunner of the Meſſiah, becauſe they underſtood the prophecy of *Malachy* literally (*f*), which alſo made the LXX add to the text the word *Thisbite*, in that paſſage of *Malachy*; therefore Jeſus Chriſt declares that it was indeed he of whom *Malachy* had ſpoken.

I acknowledge that *John the Baptiſt* did not do any miracle; but then he uttered 1. So plain an oracle concerning the miraculous effuſion of the gifts of the Holy Ghoſt upon the Diſciples, that we find nothing ſo great or ſo clear in all the ancient prophecies; *He that comes after me*, ſaith he, *ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt, and with fire.*

2. He gave a ſecond oracle, tho' not ſo plain as the former, concerning the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; *Whoſe fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and will burn up the chaff with fire.*

Theſe two oracles contain the end of the old diſpenſation, and the beginning of the new; the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were given to facilitate the publiſhing of the Goſpel among the *Gentiles*; and the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and of the temple, happened as well to puniſh the crime which the *Jews* had committed when they put the Meſſiah to death;

(*f*) Mal. iv. 5.

death; as to take away all their pretences of believing that the Meſſiah was not come, who was to appear whilſt that temple ſtood.

But before I conclude this chapter, I muſt obſerve three or four things, which are very neceſſary to confirm the authority of the teſtimony which this forerunner of the Meſſiah hath given to Jeſus Chriſt.

It is a maxim amongſt the *Jews*, That he who is acknowledg'd for a Prophet, may confirm the authority of another, by atteſting him to be a true Prophet (*g*). And this is that which S. *John* did to Chriſt; he was generally accounted a Prophet, and he atteſted that Jeſus Chriſt was ſo. This was that which confounded the elders of the *Jews*, when they demanded of our Saviour by what authority *John* acted? Jeſus Chriſt anſwered their queſtion with another, Whether S. *John* had a call from God?

The firſt obſervation therefore is, That we cannot accuſe him of acting underhand with Jeſus Chriſt, for we do not find any correſpondence kept up between them; one of them was the ſon of a prieſt, the other of a carpenter's wife; the one dwelt in *Judea*, the other in *Galilee*; the one concealed himſelf, whilſt the others reputation had got him a great many Diſciples. The Diſciples of the one were very jealous of the Diſciples of the other, and endeavoured to inſpire their maſter with the jealouſie that poſſeſſed themſelves.

The ſecond is, That the Diſciples of Jeſus are the perſons that wrote the hiſtory of *John the Baptiſt*, which they do as thoſe who were concern'd for his glory and reputation, tho' at firſt they did not ſtand in the leaſt by him, but rather by that means inflamed *Herod*'s hatred againſt them, who contributed to the death of S. *John*, as well as of Jeſus Chriſt.

The third is, That when S. *John* was beheaded, who never had any correſpondence with Jeſus Chriſt, it is extravagant to conceive, that the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt ſhould have forged the teſtimony which they ſay this great man gave to Chriſt, becauſe this would have been to employ the authority of a man, who never having wrought any miracles, and being long ſince beheaded by the order of *Herod*, ſeem'd to be quite forgotten.

The fourth is, That it is not probable that they could ever entertain a deſign of impoſing on the world in ſuch a matter as this, which related to publick facts known to all *Judea*, to all the prieſts, yea to the whole nation aſſembled at their publick feaſts, to *Herod* the king, and to the Diſciples of *John* themſelves, who would not have been wanting to refute and convince them, whereas on the contrary we ſee, that by the diſpoſition which S. *John* had wrought in them, they were eaſily won to the faith of Chriſt. This is evident from the example of *Apollos* a Diſciple of *John the Baptiſt*'s Diſciples, who became afterwards ſo excellent a preacher of the Chriſtian religion.

(*g*) *Maimonid.* de fundam. legis.

CHAP. VII.

That JESUS CHRIST *was born of the Family of* DAVID, *then reduced to a mean Condition, as had been already foretold by the Prophets.*

HAVE considered the time in which our Saviour was to be born; let us now speak of the family from whence he was to proceed. It has been proved already, that this promiſe was made to the family of *David* by *Nathan* the Prophet, 2 *Sam.* VII. 12. 1 *Chron.* XVII. 11. in the year of the world 2959. *David* repeats this his hope, *Pſalm* LXXXIX. 4. and *Pſalm* CXXXII. 11. And about the year of the world 3292 the Prophet *Iſaiah* adds further, that the Meſſiah ſhould be in a deſpicable condition.

There are four things which fully confirm this truth.

The firſt is the kindred which was between *Elizabeth* and the Bleſſed Virgin, whence it appear'd that her relations were of the tribe of *Juda*, and that ſhe was known to be of the family of *David*.

One ought to obſerve here a thing, which tho' at firſt ſight ſeems to be of ſmall importance, yet we cannot but think that S. *Luke* wrote it without deſign, and that is the journey of the Bleſſed Virgin to one of the cities of *Judah*, after her conception, to viſit *Elizabeth* her kinſwoman, the wife of *Zacharieh*, and the mother of *John the Baptiſt*; I ſhall not mention at preſent any other reaſons of this journey, which may ſeem to be worthy of the Divine wiſdom, and ſo I ſhall only obſerve at preſent, that this viſit was made to *Elizabeth* in a city of *Judah*, which is a demonſtrative proof that Jeſus Chriſt was of the family of *David*, and conſequently of that of *Judah*; ſo that this is far from being made uſe of as an objection againſt it, as ſome have done.

It is well known that the prieſts had leave to take a wife of what tribe they pleaſed; but who ſee's not at firſt ſight that it was natural for a prieſt, dwelling in one of the cities of *Judah*, to marry in that tribe amongſt whom he lived; beſides that, the prieſts had of a long time affected to make alliances with that tribe before any other.

The ſecond thing which ought to be joyned to this, is, The manner of *Elizabeth's* expreſſing her ſelf to the Bleſſed Virgin, conſidering her as bearing the Meſſiah in her womb; and upon this account ſhe called her *the Mother of my Lord*, alluding to *Pſalm* CX.

The third is, That the Bleſſed Virgin in her ſong, where ſhe ſpeaks of her ſelf as the perſon in whom the promiſe made to *Abraham*, was accompliſhed, *Luke* I. *verſ.* 54. 55. which promiſe concerned the Meſſiah; ſhe ſets forth her ſelf, as heireſs to the kings of *Judah*, and choſen before any her anceſtors, notwithſtanding all their glory; *He hath put down*, ſaith ſhe, *the mighty from their ſeats, and hath exalted them of low degree.*

The fourth is, That *Zacharieh* the prieſt, who was well acquainted with the Bleſſed Virgin, at whoſe houſe ſhe had been during the firſt three months of her being with child, and who could not be ignorant of her

her lineage, always owned her to be of the family of *David*. It is evident that he look'd upon the Bleſſed Virgin as the mother of the Meſſiah, as well as *Elizabeth* his wife. He ſeems to have conſidered the infant that was to be born of her, as the Redeemer promiſed to *Abraham*, and the Bleſſed Virgin as the heireſs of *David*; and therefore ſaith, *That God had raiſed up an horn of ſalvation for us in the houſe of his ſervant David*: there can be nothing more convincing than this obſervation: for firſt, *Zachariah* was a prieſt, that is, one of thoſe to whom the care of the genealogies of the *Jews* was committed. 2. He appears to have been very well verſed in the prophecies which fixed the Meſſiah to the family of *David*. 3. He conſider'd his ſon as the forerunner of the Meſſiah, when he propoſed that the oracle of *Malachy* ſhould be fulfilled in that ſon, whom God had ſo miraculouſly beſtowed upon him. 4. He needed only have examined the agreements of her marriage, and he would then certainly know whether the Bleſſed Virgin was not of another tribe; which would have cured him of any poſſible illuſion.

In ſhort, S. *Luke* obſerves very exactly, that this journey of the Virgin to her kinſwoman, and all the circumſtances which prove the Bleſſed Virgin to have been of the family of *David*, were things well known throughout all the hill-country of *Judea*, that it might not be pretended that this important fact was any ways obſcure.

But ſecondly, this genealogy of Jeſus Chriſt is carried up to *David* and *Judah*; and it is viſible that this was a thing exactly known, eſpecially ſince Jeſus Chriſt always paſſed for the ſon of *David*, blind men themſelves calling him ſo.

A third thing to be conſidered is, the Bleſſed Virgins going to *Bethlehem* to be there enrolled, according to the decree of *Auguſtus Ceſar*. There had been ſeveral numbrings of the people; the firſt was at the appointment of God himſelf; the ſecond was by an order from *David*; and in both an exact diſtinction was made between the tribes themſelves, and the families of each tribe: and one ſee's that the ſame was obſerved in this laſt regiſter which was made by *Auguſtus*'s decree in the 4000 year of the world.

Joſeph and *Mary* went up to *Bethlehem*, which was the ſeat of *David*'s family: nothing appears here of deſign or affectation; they made no ſtay at *Bethlehem*, and the occaſion that brought them thither, was abſolutely ſtrange and unlook'd for; and yet it was certainly an accompliſhment of that prophecy of *Micah*, *Chap.* V. *verſe* 2. *But thou* Bethlehem Ephratah, *&c.*

This remark upon the decree of *Auguſtus* is of great moment, becauſe thereby the virgins being of the family of *David* appears to be the moſt indiſputable truth in the world, as having been owned firſt by the whole family of *Judah* for three months. Secondly, by the genealogy which ſubſiſted entire, as the *Talmudiſts* themſelves grant in the treatiſe *de Sponſal. Chap.* IV. *ſect.* 5, where they teſtifie that the genealogy of the royal family was without difficulty. 3. By the publick teſtimony of all their kindred, who met in a body before the *Roman* magiſtrate.

The fourth remark is, That when *Herod* knew of the birth of the Meſſiah at *Bethlehem*, where by the confeſſion of the *Jews* he was to be born, he would have envolved Jeſus Chriſt in the maſſacre which ſwept

away the innocent children, if the ſame Providence which brought him to *Bethlehem*, to demonſtrate that he was of the houſe of *David*, had not withdrawn him from thence to preſerve him from that tyrant, who was afraid of being caſt from his throne by one of *David*'s heirs.

The fifth is, That Jeſus Chriſt did not only often allude to the place of his birth, in calling himſelf *the Bread come down from Heaven*, the word *Bethlehem* ſignifying the Houſe of Bread; but he conſtantly own'd himſelf for the ſon of *David*. Upon this it is that he grounds the objection which he makes to the *Jews*; *How is it that* David *calls the Meſſiah his Lord?* And indeed this fact was ſo conſtantly owned by all, that even perſons who were poſſeſſed with devils, did not diſpute it, as may be ſeen in the Evangeliſts.

The ſixth is, That tho' two of the Evangeliſts ſet down the genealogy of our Saviour with ſome difference, yet the *Jews* never took occaſion from thence to queſtion Jeſus Chriſt's deſcent from *David*; his Apoſtles always building on that foundation; which may be ſeen as a thing taken for granted in S. *Peter*'s ſermon, *Acts* II. and in the epiſtles of S. *Paul*, where we find our Saviour always ſtiled *the Son of* David according to the fleſh.

To theſe already mentioned we may add the three following obſervations; the firſt is, That if the genealogy of our Saviour had not been diſtinctly known, the Apoſtles would never have troubled themſelves to have ſet it down; much leſs would they have plac'd it in the front of their books, as knowing that the beginnings of books are always more examined than the ends, and would certainly be ſo by a people who always ſtuck very cloſe to their genealogies. In ſhort, either the genealogies of the *Jews* were at that time as confuſed as they are at preſent, and ſo they could not have ſerved as characters to diſcover the Meſſiah by; in which caſe the Apoſtles would have contented themſelves to have hinted, that Jeſus Chriſt always paſs for the ſon of *David*, as they have done in ſeveral places of their writings, without giving us the whole ſeries of his pedigree; or elſe they were at that time diſtinctly known, in which caſe it was the eaſieſt thing in the world to have confuted them.

The 2d is, That the differences which are found between the genealogy of Jeſus Chriſt ſet down by S. *Matthew*, and that by S. *Luke*, is ſo far from giving us an occaſion to doubt of the Apoſtles faithfulneſs in this matter, that indeed it is a new proof of their exactneſs in a matter of ſo great importance. For it can ſcarcely be imagined but that in ſo long a ſeries of ages, there muſt have been ſome of the anceſtors of our Saviour, in whom that law took place, which obliged the younger brother to marry the widow of his elder brother deceaſed without iſſue, and ſo to raiſe up ſeed to him, which gave occaſion to a genealogy not natural, but legal, the children bearing the name of the deceaſed elder brother, and poſſeſſing his eſtate. Now the Evangeliſts have ſet down both theſe genealogies exactly, which is an invincible argument of their care and fidelity.

The third is, That it was ſo much the more neceſſary to make this remark in the genealogy of the Meſſiah, becauſe as we have obſerved elſewhere, it was with relation to the deſire of giving birth to the Meſſiah, or of having children which might live under his empire, that God

at

at firſt permitted this kind of inceſt, with the widow of a deceaſed brother, which otherwiſe was ſo ſeverely prohibited by the law.

As to the low eſtate to which the family of *David* was then reduced, it is viſible that *David* and *Solomon* reigned with great glory, but *Rehoboam* ſucceeding them, ten tribes fell from him to *Jeroboam*, in the year of the world 3029. and the poſterity of *Rehoboam* was afterwards dethroned by *Nebuchadnezzar*, who carried *Zedechiah* the king into captivity in the year 3416.

After their return from captivity, they were entirely thruſt from the throne: the prieſts at firſt governing that nation; the *Maccabees*, who were of the family of *Levi*, reigning in *Judea*, from the return of the captivity of *Babylon*, until *Herod* the *Edomite*, who was made maſter of *Judea* by the favour of the *Romans*.

2. The family of *David* was at that time removed from their ancient ſeat, and was now fixed at *Nazareth*, where Providence ſeems to have removed them from *Bethlehem*, to take away that object of *Herod*'s jealouſie, which would have offended him, as we ſee it did when the wiſe men acquainted him with the birth of Jeſus, which obliged him to make a diligent enquiry after the place where the Meſſiah was to be born, that Meſſiah whom he conceived to be a prince, who would rob him of the ſovereignty to which he was raiſed.

In the third place, the Bleſſed Virgin was betrothed to a carpenter, *Juſtin Martyr* tells us that Jeſus Chriſt made ploughs. See what the heirs of the kings of *Judah* were reduced to.

Fourthly, when ſhe came to *Bethlehem*, ſhe lodged in an inn, her kindred being not in a condition to afford her better accommodation.

It appears that the Divine Providence was very careful in executing this deſign. There were ſome decays of the family of *David*, which the Bleſſed Virgin expreſſes in her ſong. She was deſcended from the younger brothers of depoſed princes, and reduced to private ſtate, ſhe ſpeaks of nothing but of lowneſs and meanneſs, not only in a way of humility, but to demonſtrate the fulfilling of the prophecy concerning the throne of *Jeſſe*.

But that this might appear more evidently, and confirm'd by the law, as it was her duty to preſent her ſon in the temple, after the ſeventh day, with an offering; ſo ſhe does not offer what is preſcribed to the rich and wealthy, but an offering which is appropriated by God in the law to poor people, as appears *Lev.* XII.

One ſee's by the marriage feaſt at *Cana* in *Galilee*, that the kindred of Jeſus Chriſt were not very rich, their wanting of wine on ſuch an occaſion, was no great mark of plenty.

One ſee's alſo, that Jeſus Chriſt frequently repreſents himſelf, as not having where to reſt his head: on the croſs he recommends his mother to one of his Diſciples, and was himſelf maintained by thoſe who followed him.

CHAP. VIII.

That Jesus Christ *was conceived by the Virgin* Mary, *without any Operation of Man.*

AS this article is one of the moſt important of our religion, ſo it is well worth our attentive conſideration. We may take notice here, that according to the obſervation of *Juſtin Martyr* (*b*), the fable of *Perſeus*, took its riſe from the prophecy of *Iſaiah*. However, that prophecy being very expreſs according to the tranſlation of the LXX. we are to conſider how it was accompliſhed. It will not be enough here to ſay, that ordinarily extream poverty is a ſufficient bar againſt the ſuſpicion of adultery; and therefore we deſire the reader only to call to mind the obſervations ſet down in the ſecond chapter of the ſecond part of theſe Reflexions on the Books of the law of *Moſes*. For

1. Polygamy and divorces were very frequent in the time of Jeſus Chriſt, as appears from ſeveral paſſages of the Goſpel, where God was pleaſed to give us examples thereof.

2. God was willing to give us inſtances of his ſeverity againſt adultereſſes, amongſt which thoſe were reckoned who ſuffered themſelves to be defiled after they were betrothed. We have an example hereof in the eighth *chapter* of the Goſpel according to S. *John*, which I have illuſtrated in the fourth chapter of this fourth part.

3. It appears that the ſame laws which engaged parents to preſerve the virginity of their daughters, did continue, and were ſtill obſerved by the *Jews*, as well as thoſe other laws which conſtituted the body of their religion: when Jeſus Chriſt upbraids the *Jews* for having changed the true ſenſe of the law, yet he never reproaches them upon this account.

4. The relation ſet down in the eighth *chapter* of S. *John*, makes it appear that the waters of jealouſie ſtill retained their virtue; that which Jeſus Chriſt writ on the ground being probably nothing elſe but the curſes which the law denounced againſt the woman that ſhould violate her honour.

I have made it very evident in the twentieth chapter of my ſecond part, what was the uſe of thoſe laws concerning the marks of virginity, to prevent any doubts that might ariſe concerning the ſame: it remains now to conſider the ſeveral paſſages of the Evangeliſts, and to ſee what proofs we can find there to confirm this point, That *Mary* was indeed a virgin when ſhe conceived Jeſus Chriſt, and how we may anſwer the objections which the enemies of Chriſtianity make againſt this truth.

The Evangeliſts tell us that this remarkable fact was declared by the Angel *Gabriel*, who had before foretold to *Daniel* the coming of the Meſſiah, and ſignified the exact time thereof. The conception of *Iſaac* by a barren mother, as well as that of *Samuel* and *John the Baptiſt*, had been already

(*b*) *Dial. cum Typh.* p. 297. Iſai. 5.

already declared in the ſame manner; and one miracle ought to ſerve as a preparation for the belief of a greater.

When the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt ſpeak of the fact, they ſpeak of it as thing known throughout all *Jeruſalém*, and which had no relation to their maſter. Beſides, we know the jealouſie that was between the Diſciples of S. *John*, and thoſe of our Saviour.

But we have a further account beſides of the meſſage of an Angel to *Joſeph*, after he had perceived that his betrothed wife was with child; for when he was ready to divorce her, either by expoſing her to the rigour of the Divine law, *Deut.* XXII. 23, or elſe by exempting her from that extremity, he is diverted from his intention by this warning from heaven. In all which we meet with nothing but what is very probable; for *Joſeph* expreſſes his hatred and diſlike, as conceiving her to be debauched, and was reſolved not to receive her, but by an order from heaven.

Moreover it is very remarkable, That we find all things recited in ſuch a manner, as it was neceſſary they ſhould come to paſs, on ſuppoſition that the Meſſiah was to be born of a virgin of the houſe of *David*.

For firſt, We find this event appeared incredible to the perſon her ſelf, who was deſigned to effect it; becauſe ſhe could not eaſily make the application at firſt.

2. It caus'd exceeding joy to the perſon who ſaw her ſelf choſen by God to fulfil ſo glorious a promiſe, whereby the family of *David* was to be reſtor'd to its ancient luſtre. This is evident from the hymn of the Bleſſed Virgin: which if we compare with the *Pſalms* of *David*, we ſhall ſee that that family ſtill retained all the piety of their anceſtors, with all thoſe ſigns of acknowledgment which an event of ſuch a nature did juſtly require.

3. It appears that *Joſeph* acquieſced in this truth, he who otherwiſe did not ſeem very credulous, till he was inſtructed from heaven concerning a matter ſo rare and difficult to be conceived. He retires for ſome time into *Egypt*, and affords *Mary* and her ſon all the ſervice they could reaſonably expect from him.

S. *Jerome* alledges three reaſons why it was needful for the Bleſſed Virgin to be betrothed to *Joſeph* (*i*).

1. That the original of the Bleſſed Virgin might be proved by the pedigree of *Joſeph*, to whom ſhe was related.

2. That according to the law of *Moſes*, ſhe might not be ſtoned as an adultereſs.

3. That in her flight into *Egypt* ſhe might have the comfort of a guardian rather than of a huſband.

Neither can any thing be oppoſed to the belief of theſe matters, but ſome very weak conjectures: The firſt is, That her being contracted doth ſomething obſcure the diſtinct notion of virginity; and ſecondly, That the Bleſſed Virgin did always paſs for the wife of *Joſeph*, even according to the ſtyle of Jeſus Chriſt himſelf. And laſtly, That the relation which the Evangeliſts give of this matter, was not known till long after the death of Jeſus Chriſt.

But

(*i*) Contr. *Helvidium*.

But it is an eaſie matter to ſatisfie the mind of any reaſonable reader in this thing. It was neceſſary that the Bleſſed Virgin ſhould be betrothed:

1. To ſecure her life, which would have been in danger, if ſhe had been delivered whilſt ſhe was reputed to be a virgin; for ſhe would have been accuſed of whoredom, and conſequently have been put to death.

2. It was neceſſary ſhe ſhould be betrothed, and paſs for the lawful wife of *Joſeph*, that her ſon might not be baniſh'd from the congregation of *Iſrael*, as a baſtard in the rigour of the law.

As for the other objection, I eaſily grant that the Bleſſed Virgin always paſs'd for the wife of *Joſeph*; ſhe her ſelf ſaith, *I and thy father ſought thee.* But withal, at that very time Jeſus Chriſt unvailed that myſtery in the preſence of all the *Jews*, maintaining that he was the Son of God, in whoſe houſe he was at that time; it was at a ſolemn feaſt of the *Jews*, where the whole nation was aſſembled, and in the midſt of an aſſembly of their Doctors, that he declared the temple to be the houſe of his father, as he afterwards conſtantly called it.

We find him at another time declaring the ſame in the preſence of his family at *Cana* in *Galilee*, *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* ſaith he to the Bleſſed Virgin (*k*); to put her in mind of ſome paſſages which could not but preſerve in her a very particular reſpect for him.

He gives yet a further degree of light into this matter, when, his mother ſeeking to come at him, he ſaith, *Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?* that is, kinſmen. 'Tis probable that *Joſeph* was dead, before our Saviour entred upon his miniſtry; however his making no mention of his reputed father, ſhews how careful he was to avoid any thing that might obſcure his miraculous birth.

Laſt of all, it is very conſiderable, that this paſſage being not the only character which was to diſtinguiſh the Meſſiah from all others, but was to be confirmed by the miracles of Jeſus Chriſt, by his reſurrection, and thoſe other proofs of his Divine nature, it was at firſt not much inſiſted on, becauſe there was a neceſſity that it ſhould continue vailed for ſome time, upon the account of the frequent apparitions of Angels, and of God himſelf in a human form, that ſo the truth of his humanity ſhould be eſtabliſhed by his life and death, before the publication of his miraculous conception.

For it is certain that the Apoſtles preached up this truth, and that the Evangeliſts had put it in writing before the deſtruction of the Jewiſh common-wealth; and yet we do not find that it was ever conteſted. The Evangeliſts deſcribe the methods which the *Jews* took to make the reſurrection of Chriſt to be doubted of, and to ſlight his miracles; and do we think they would not as well have given us the objections of the *Jews* againſt a thing, of which till then never any inſtance had been known in the world?

I know very well that ſome of the ancients have told us that the *Jews* were offended, that the Bleſſed Virgin, after ſhe was delivered of our Saviour, ſhould ſeat her ſelf in the place appointed for virgins, and that becauſe *Zacharias* the prieſt maintained her in ſo doing, he was thereupon

(*k*) John ii. 4.

thereupon kill'd by them between the temple and the altar, with which our Saviour upbraids the *Jews*. I know alſo that they affirm that ſhe was forced to confirm the truth of her virginity, by ſubmitting her ſelf to a ſearch of matrons: yet I cannot believe that ſhe ever underwent any ſuch examination, of which the ſilence of the Evangeliſts, and S. *Luke*'s in particular, fully convinces me, and therefore am inclined to think that no ſuch objection was ever made againſt her.

In the mean time it is well worth our noting, 1. That the Bleſſed Virgin had *Zachariah* the prieſt as an examiner and witneſs of her behaviour from the beginning, at whoſe houſe ſhe abode during the firſt months of her being with child, and who publickly divulged the miraculous birth of his own ſon, and his leaping in his mother's womb at the ſalutation of the Bleſſed Virgin.

2. That the Bleſſed Virgin lived many years after the paſſion of our Saviour, that ſhe might undergo and anſwer any accuſations of that nature.

3. That ſhe alſo had for witneſſes of the miracles which attended her conception, all the Diſciples of S. *John*, as well as thoſe of Jeſus Chriſt, tho' the Diſciples of S. *John* did not agree with the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt.

4. That what ſhe declared of her ſelf, was not a fact which had no traces whereby it might be examined in the *Old Teſtament*.

5. That the *Jews* had thirty years to examin the ſeveral particulars which had relation to the Meſſiah, and the miraculous manner of his birth, at the time when ſhe publiſhed this particular paſſage of her life.

6. That we cannot call in queſtion the veracity of the Bleſſed Virgin in the account which ſhe gives us of what concern'd her ſelf, of which no witneſs could be produced, foraſmuch as the accompliſhment of that part of her prophecy, That *all nations ſhould call her bleſſed*, clearly ſhews that ſhe had received the ſpirit of prophecy; no more than we can ſuſpect any forgeries in the relations of other Prophets, tho' we have no other teſtimony concerning them, but that of the Prophets themſelves.

CHAP. IX.

That JESUS CHRIST *lived and preached after the ſame Manner as the* PROPHETS *had foretold the* MESSIAH *ſhould do.*

I HAVE clearly ſhewn that Jeſus Chriſt was born of the poſterity of *Adam*, by *Seth*, by *Noah*, by *Abraham*, by *Iſaac*, by *Jacob*, by *Judah*, by *David*, as it was foretold of the Meſſiah by the moſt ancient oracles, the encreaſe of which I have already taken notice of in my third part.

I have afterwards ſhewed, That Jeſus Chriſt was born of a virgin, whereby

whereby those oracles, *The seed of the woman shall bruise thy head* (*l*), and *A virgin shall conceive and bear a son* (*m*), seem'd to be clearly accomplished. Let us now see, according to those oracles, what kind of person the Messiah was to be, from his birth to his death, according to those idea's which the Prophets have given us.

Moses expressly tells us, *Deut.* 18. that the Messiah was to resemble him; *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet like unto me* (*n*): which place, as I have observed before, has been so constantly applyed to the Messiah, that it appears that not only *John the Baptist*, when he sent his Disciples to Jesus Christ, *Philip* speaking to *Nathanael*, and the Disciples when they were asked by our Saviour who he was, but also the *Samaritan* woman understood it so without the least hesitation, and said, That when the Messiah should come, he would tell them all things.

In short, one see's an exact proportion between *Moses* and Jesus Christ. Not only because our Saviour was saved in his infancy from the hand of *Herod*, and from a river of blood, like another *Moses*, or because *Egypt* serv'd for a retreat to him, as *Moses* had hid himself in *Arabia:* or because he was rejected by his brethren, those of *Nazareth*, who would have thrown him headlong from a rock, because he declared himself to be the promised deliverer and Messiah, by applying to himself the words of *Isaiah*, *The spirit of the Lord is upon me*, &c.

Neither shall I now take notice of his being despised and disown'd by his brethren, and called a *Galilean*, whereas indeed he was of *Judea*; for indeed the Messiah was to be treated as a *Nazarene*, that is, a contemptible person, and a man of no consideration; for we may find that because our Saviour was brought up at *Nazareth*, tho' he was born at *Bethlehem*, he was therefore look'd upon as a person incapable of any thing that was great; *Can any good thing come out of* Nazareth? said *Nathanael* to *Philip* (*o*); and the Pharisees to the officers whom they had sent to take Jesus, *Search and look, for out of* Galilee *ariseth no Prophet*, much less the great Prophet, the Messiah, who by way of eminence is so called. 'Tis upon this account that he was called a *Galilean*, not only by the Heathens, but by his own Disciples too; for the word *Galilean* seems to have been a name for one of an impure extraction, because many of other nations dwelt among the *Jews* in *Galilee*. But I shall take notice of several other more important resemblances between them, and such as have relation to the ministry of *Moses* rather than his person, by referring all to his preaching, his miracles, his predictions, and some other heads of that nature.

First then, Jesus Christ that he might at first maintain the character of the Messiah, appears in the temple, *John the Baptist* had heard him called the Son of God, by a very peculiar witness, a voice from heaven. Wherefore we see that at his first entry upon his ministry, he drives out those that prophaned the house of God, whom he called his Father, with a scourge; and this he did at the feast of the passover, before the whole nation of the *Jews* (*p*).

Here is another character of the Messiah; he was to begin the exercise of

(*l*) Gen. iii. 15.
(*m*) Isai. vii. 14.
(*n*) Deut. xviii. 15.
(*o*) John i. 46.
(*p*) John ii. 13, 14, 15, &c.

of his miniſterial functions, in the tribes of *Naphtali* and *Zebulon*, according to the prophecy of *Iſaiah* (*q*); and this our Saviour exactly accompliſhed by his beginning to preach at *Nazareth*, which was in the tribe of *Zebulon*, and he converſed much at *Capernaum*, which was in the tribe of *Naphtali*, according to the obſervation of the Evangeliſts.

But I proceed to conſider ſome circumſtances of his miniſtry. *Iſaiah* had foretold, that the Meſſiah was to preach the Goſpel to the poor; which Jeſus applies to himſelf in the ſynagogue at *Nazareth*, declaring that in his perſon that prophecy was fulfilled; *viz. The ſpirit of the Lord God is upon me, wherefore the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek*, &c. (*r*).

The choice which he made of his Diſciples from among the meaneſt of the people, and the baſeſt of the crowd which follow'd him wherever he went, ought to paſs for a ſufficient accompliſhment of this prophecy.

The Meſſiah, according to the repreſentation which *Iſaiah* gives us of him, was to publiſh the tidings of the remiſſion of ſins; and was not this that which Jeſus Chriſt did during the courſe of his miniſtry?

The Meſſiah was to preach the remiſſion of ſin, in ſuch a manner, as that he might dry up the fountain of it, at the ſame time, in calling men to the ſtudy of ſanctification; this was admirably performed by Jeſus Chriſt, 1. In correcting thoſe abuſes which the Jewiſh Doctors had introduced into the law. Secondly, In declaring that the effect of ſanctification was to be look'd for in the heart, rather than in the eyes or hands.

One may ſee afterwards, 1. That he knew the heart of man; which proved that he made it. This he teſtifies upon ſeveral occaſions, in the anſwers which he made to thoſe that ſpoke to him, and indeed in all his diſcourſes which were ſuited to the diſpoſitions of the heart of thoſe to whom he addreſt them.

2. That he made uſe of parables, which are moral leſſons very eaſie indeed, but withal fitter for the ſubject than fables, and more worthy of God: parables alſo, which were ſo ordinary and familiar amongſt the *Jews*, that we find moſt of them at this day in the writings of the *Jews*, tho' they apply them to another uſe.

3. That he deſcended to particulars, without uſing any thing mean, which men are apt to do when they divide things minutely.

4. That he forgot no one precept of morality.

5. That he examined all the duties of religion, and made them infinitely recommendable by ſuggeſting ſuch excellent motives.

After all, we are to conſider four things in the preaching of our Saviour, which will fully prove that he was the Meſſiah.

1. That his doctrine appeared to be wholly Divine; he had never been brought up at the feet of any Doctor; but had his breeding in a carpenter's ſhop.

2. That no crime was ever objected to him, notwithſtanding that he upbraided the Phariſees with theirs; but he ſupported his doctrine by the holineſs of his converſation.

3. That

(*q*) Iſai. ix. 1. (*r*) Iſai. lxi. 1.

3. That he inſenſibly diſpoſed the people to receive him as the Meſſiah, by the characters which God had given of him in the Prophets.

4. He prepar'd his Diſciples and his auditors to expect that one day the *Gentiles* ſhould enter into the church.

In ſhort, can any thing be ſo ſurprizing, as to ſee a man who had lived thirty years as the ſon of a carpenter, to declare himſelf all at once a Doctor, to preach publickly, to cenſure the Doctors of his nation; to ſpeak of the law and Prophets with more depth and authority than all that ever went before him? Who can without ſurprize, conceive that a man of the loweſt quality, ſhould from a carpenters ſhop, come and determine queſtions about the law, and tread under his feet the authority of all the great Rabbins every where, only by an *I ſay unto you*, ſo that none was able to contradict him! Certainly when one ſee's our Saviour upon the mount explaining and defending the moral part of the law from the corruptions into which it was fallen, he appears not only as great as *Moſes* on mount *Sinai*, but even as God himſelf, when he publiſhed his laws to that his ancient people.

Neither ought any one to have leſs admiration for that perfect innocence which ſhone through the whole courſe of his life: What crime had they to charge him with when they put him to death, he who accuſed his enemies of ſo many? *Who of you*, ſaith he, *accuſeth me of ſin?* We find him only accuſed of words ill underſtood, which they were reſolved to miſinterpret: his ſaying, *That if they deſtroy'd that temple, he would rebuild it in three days*, was laid to his charge as a crime; and yet theſe words could not have been heightned into crimes, if they had been ſpoken in the ſame ſenſe which they put upon them. This was an eſſential character of the Meſſiah, who was to be the reſtorer of holineſs, according to the idea which the Prophets gave of him.

I ſhould take notice afterwards that our Saviour in his ſermons did by little and little diſpoſe the minds of his auditors and Diſciples, to conceive and believe him to be the promiſed Meſſiah. The firſt act of his publick miniſtry was an effect of his zeal for the holineſs of a temple conſecrated to his Father: he drove the buyers and ſellers out of the temple, at the feaſt of the paſſover, which action of his was a ſolemn profeſſion that he was the Son of God. Soon after at *Nazareth* he applies to himſelf that prophecy of *Iſaiah*, *The ſpirit of the Lord is upon me*, &c. He explains himſelf yet more diſtinctly in *Jeruſalem* at the ſecond paſſover which he celebrated during the time of his miniſtry, that they might underſtand that he was the Meſſiah, according to the account which the Evangeliſts give us; and he explains himſelf yet more particularly upon *John the Baptiſts* meſſage to him. By which means this truth became already ſo illuſtrious, that the multitudes would proclaim him King, that is, publickly own him for the Meſſiah, and obey him as their rightful Soveraign. And laſtly, He explains himſelf in this matter by a queſtion, when he aſked his Diſciples, What cenſures were paſt upon him in *Judæa*, and what they themſelves thought of him (*s*)?

In ſhort, it is certain that Jeſus prepared the minds of his Diſciples to look for the calling of the *Gentiles*, which alſo was the character of the Meſſiah. *Jacob* had propheſied of old, *To him ſhall the gathering of*

(*s*) Matt. xvi.

the people be (*t*). But I ſhall paſs by the oracles which foretel this matter. What ſignifies the hiſtory of the prodigal, unleſs it be the calling and the return of the *Gentiles*; the eldeſt ſon (the *Jew*) being extreamly troubled at it. What means that ſaying of our Saviour, That *he had other ſheep*, &c. or his prediction, That *many ſhould come from the eaſt and weſt, and ſit down with* Abraham, *when the children of the kingdom ſhould be caſt forth?* I ſhall take notice in another place of the frequent repetition of ſuch like oracles, and their exact accompliſhment. Theſe are ſufficient at preſent to juſtifie the ſolidity of this laſt reflexion, and the truth of this concluſion at the ſame time, that if one examines the life and preaching of our Saviour, he may find all thoſe characters by which the promiſed Meſſiah might be known. Let us now proceed to the conſideration of his miracles.

CHAP. X.

That the Miracles wrought by our Saviour, *clearly prove that he is the* Messiah.

AS the Meſſiah was to be very clearly diſtinguiſhed from all others by his miracles, and as the Prophet *Iſaiah*, *Chap.* XXXV. ſets down the power of working miracles, as one of thoſe characters by which he was to be known, ſo it is of great importance to us, to examine the miracles of our Saviour with great attention, whether they have the character of truth, and whether they come up to the idea which the Prophets give us of thoſe wonders which the Meſſiah was to do.

The Evangeliſts, who tell us that he wrought almoſt an infinite number of them, have deſcribed more than thirty ſeveral ſorts of them. He changed water into wine at the wedding at *Cana*; he healed the ſick ſon of a courtier; he delivered one that was poſſeſſed in the ſynagogue at *Capernaum*; he healed S. *Peter*'s mother in law; he cauſed a vaſt number of fiſh to be caught; he cured a leper with a word, and with a touch he healed one ſick of the palſey; he cured a woman of an inveterate iſſue of blood, and raiſed the daughter of a ruler of the ſynagogue from the dead; he cured the impotent man at the pool of *Bethſda*; he cured him that had a wither'd hand; he deliver'd a poſſeſſed perſon that was blind and dumb; he recover'd the centurion's ſervant, and rais'd to life the ſon of the widow of *Naim*.

Neither are theſe that follow any leſs conſiderable; he reſtores ſight to two blind men, he caſts forth a dumb devil, he aſſwages a tempeſt by his word, he delivers two poſſeſſed perſons, and permits the devil to go into the herd of ſwine of the *Gadarens*; he feeds above five thouſand perſons with two loaves and five fiſhes; he walks upon the ſea, and calmeth a ſecond

(*t*) Gen. xlix. 10.

a ſecond tempeſt; he caſts forth a devil from a daughter of a woman of *Canaan*, who was poſſeſſed; he cures one deaf and dumb; he feeds four thouſand perſons with ſeven loaves; he reſtores ſight to a blind man of *Bethſaida*; he caſts out a devil, after his Diſciples had in vain attempted it; he reſtores ſight to one born blind; he cured a crooked woman; he cures one of the dropſie on the ſabbath day; he raiſes *Lazarus* from the grave, after he had been dead four days; he heals ten lepers afterwards; he reſtores ſight to a blind man at his entring into *Jericho*; and cures the lame and blind in the temple it ſelf.

There are ſeveral characters which aſſure us of the faithfulneſs of the Evangeliſts in theſe their relations: 1. They wrote theſe things to convert the *Jews* before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. 2. They markt the circumſtances very exactly, and none could be ignorant of them, ſince they all went thrice a year up to *Jeruſalem*. 3. The facts which they relate were laſting, and ſuch as might be examined. 4. They ſpeak of facts which they ſuppoſe that Jeſus Chriſt was willing ſhould be beyond all conteſt, that they might be better examined. 5. They ſpeak of thoſe facts which they maintain to be the accompliſhment of the oracles concerning the Meſſiah whom the *Jews* expected.

But there are not fewer characters of truth in the miracles of our Saviour to buoy them up: The firſt is, That moſt of the diſeaſes which Jeſus Chriſt cured, are deſcribed as abſolutely incurable; this obſervation is of great moment, as well to diſcover to us the infinite power exerted by Jeſus Chriſt, as to make known the extraordinary wiſdom of the Apoſtles, who being men without learning, did notwithſtanding ſet down the ſymptomes of the diſeaſes which their maſter cured, far beyond what might be expected from their natural capacities.

The ſecond reflexion belongs to the ſubjects upon whom theſe miracles were wrought; for we ſcarce find any of them, except his curing S. *Peter*'s mother in law, to be wrought upon perſons who had leaſt relation to Jeſus Chriſt: he heals the ſervant of the high prieſt, the ſon of the ruler of a ſynagogue, the ſon of a *Roman* centurion, and ſeveral others.

A third reflexion may be drawn from the places where they were done, and from the witneſſes that were preſent. In ſhort, they were wrought in publick places, in the midſt of cities and ſynagogues; ſome in *Judea*, ſome in *Galilee*, ſome at *Jeruſalem*, at *Naim*, *Sidon*, &c. they were ſubmitted to the examination of the moſt implacable enemies of Jeſus Chriſt, the people of the *Jews*, the *Samaritans*, and the *Gentiles*, who dwelt in *Paleſtina*.

One may add alſo, That theſe miracles were of very different kinds, wrought in ſeveral places, and with very conſiderable circumſtances, at the moſt ſolemn feaſts, the *paſſover* and *penteco*ſt.

One ought to conſider alſo, That *Paleſtine* was full of thoſe whom our Saviour had cured; and that all the *Jews* who came up three times in a year to *Jeruſalem*, could not but take notice of them.

One ought afterwards to obſerve, That Jeſus Chriſt communicated to his Diſciples the power of working miracles in the ſecond year of his miniſtry, which none elſe had ever done before.

And laſtly it muſt be obſerved, That theſe miracles were laſting; the three

three dead men, whom our Saviour raiſed to life again, were very young, and who in all probability lived longer than decrepit old men, were in the ſight of all *Judea*; and other ſick and infirm perſons, that he had healed, enjoyed life and health. 2. In ſhort, the relation of Chriſt's miracles which *Pilate* ſent to *Tiberius*, ſufficiently teſtifies that they were facts generally known. And 3. That the certainty of them could ſo little be conteſted, that the *Jews* rather choſe to accuſe him of doing them by ſome magical ſecret, than to diſpute the truth of them.

Theſe reflexions ſufficiently confirm the truth of the Evangeliſts relation, and of the miracles of Jeſus Chriſt. To agree to what has been ſaid, we need not refute the folly of thoſe, who have compared the miracles falſly attributed to *Apollonius Tyanæus*, with thoſe of Jeſus Chriſt. One hardly knows at this day whether ever there was ſuch a man as *Apollonius*; whereas ever ſince the Apoſtles there have been Chriſtians, who have read the hiſtory of the miracles of Jeſus Chriſt, and who have believed them after a due examination. Which of *Apollonius*'s his diſciples was ever ſo bold as to ſay to Heathens, as *Tertullian* did in the ſecond century, in his apologetick, *Bring to us what poſſeſſed perſons you pleaſe, and we will heal them in the name of Jeſus Chriſt?*

But we ought alſo to add one thing more, That theſe miracles of Jeſus Chriſt were exactly ſuch as ought to have been made to prove him to be the Meſſiah.

1. They were exactly ſuch as *Iſaiah* had foretold concerning the Meſſiah, *Chap.* XXXV. as may be ſeen by comparing them with the text.

One ought only to obſerve, That this character is ſo peculiar that it diſtinguiſhes the Meſſiah from all the other Prophets, who went before him; for none of thoſe to whom God had given power to work miracles, had either given ſight to the blind, or power to the lame to walk.

2. They perfectly came up to the end of his miniſtry, as he was the Meſſiah; for it was his deſign to aſſure his Diſciples of the immortality which he promiſed to them; and theſe cures, and theſe reſurrections which were wrought only by his word, were ſufficient to convince them, as well of the ſoveraign power he had to execute his promiſes, as of his goodneſs which was neceſſary to confirm the faith of his followers.

3. Some of his miracles were ſuch as evinced his likeneſs to *Moſes*; he changes water into wine at *Cana*, he feeds many thouſands in the deſert, he walks on the water, and makes one of his Diſciples to walk with him; as *Moſes* changed the waters to blood, and had cauſed manna to rain down upon the *Iſraelites*, and had opened the ſea for their paſſage.

4. One ought to obſerve here, That if Jeſus Chriſt's miracles were not like thoſe of *Moſes*, two only excepted, viz. his curſing of the barren fig-tree, and the drowning of the ſwine; this was to ſhew that he was not come like *Moſes* to execute the judgments of God, but to exerciſe acts of grace and mercy; thoſe now mentioned being ſufficient to evince it was not for want of power.

If the *Samaritan* woman argued very rationally when ſhe ſaid con-

cerning Chriſt, *When the Meſſiah ſhall come, will he do greater ſigns than theſe?* we may with more reaſon urge it now, ſince we know not only that Jeſus Chriſt hath wrought ſuch great miracles, but alſo conferr'd upon his Diſciples a power of doing greater miracles than himſelf ever did.

CHAP. XI.

That the Predictions of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, *clearly prove him to be the* MESSIAH.

ONE might have obſerv'd, That *John the Baptiſt* foretold many things concerning the perſon of our Lord, and the glory of his miniſtry; that *Simeon* foretold that he was to be *a ſign which ſhould be ſpoken againſt*; and it is known how exactly theſe things were fulfilled. But it will be more for our purpoſe to examine thoſe propheſies which were pronounced by Chriſt himſelf.

I pretend not to repeat them all here, nor to ſhew by how many ways, and upon how many occaſions Jeſus Chriſt did reiterate them: this would take up too much time; I ſhall only ſet down the chief of them, and add ſome few reflexions.

When Jeſus Chriſt calls the fiſhers to follow him, he foretels that he would make them teachers of the world; *I will make you*, ſaith he, *fiſhers of men*. He promiſes to make them famous by miracles, and to ſend them the gifts of his Holy Spirit, which the people of *Iſrael* had now for above 400 years been deprived of.

He promiſed to give them an authority over the conſciences of men, ſo that what they ſhould forbid us on earth, ſhould be forbidden in heaven.

He foretels the calling of the *Gentiles* to his religion; *Many*, ſaith he, *ſhall come from the eaſt and weſt, and ſhall ſit down with* Abraham, Iſaac, *and* Jacob *in the kingdom of heaven*. Which is the more conſiderable, becauſe he ſeemed himſelf unwilling to ſhew any favour to the *Gentiles*, whom he called *Dogs*, according to the language of the *Jews*.

He foretels the rejection of the *Jews*; *The children of the kingdom*, ſaith he, *ſhall be caſt out into outer darkneſs*.

He foretels the perſecutions which were to happen to his Diſciples from the *Jews*, as well as from the *Roman* governours; *They ſhall lay their hands on you, and perſecute you, delivering you up to the ſynagogues, and into priſons, being brought before kings*, &c.

He foretels that notwithſtanding all theſe perſecutions, yet his church ſhould not only continue, aſſuring them that *the gates of hell ſhould never prevail againſt her*; but alſo ſhould greatly flouriſh and encreaſe, according to what *David* had foretold, *Pſalm* CX. *verſe* 3. alluding to the ſuddain fruitfulneſs which is cauſed by dew.

He

He above thirty times foretels his ſuffering and death.

He foretels his reſurrection the third day.

He foretels that *Judas* ſhould betray him, S. *Peter* deny him, that his Apoſtles ſhould be ſcattered, as ſoon as they ſhould ſee him ſmitten. He foretels the martyrdom of S. *Peter*, which he was to ſuffer for his ſake, and to S. *John*, that he was to ſurvive the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. He foretels that after his aſcenſion to *heaven*, he ſhould begin the call of all the nations of the earth; *When I ſhall be lifted up from the earth*, ſaith he, *I ſhall draw all men unto me*.

He often foretels the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* and the temple; *Behold*, ſaith he, *your houſe is left unto you deſolate*.

He foretels that many falſe Meſſiah's ſhould come after him, whom the *Jews* ſhould receive, tho' they had rejected him as an impoſtor.

Several reflexions may be made upon theſe predictions of our Lord. In ſhort, one may obſerve at firſt, That there are three ſorts of them in the *New Teſtament*; ſome of them were fulfilled ſoon after they were pronounced, as thoſe concerning the aſs which he ſent his Diſciples for, thoſe of his death and reſurrection, of S. *Peter*'s denying him, and the flight of his Apoſtles, *&c.*

The deſign of theſe was to eſtabliſh the belief of thoſe which were further off, which is the method of God himſelf the Father of our Lord in the *Old Teſtament*, as I have obſerved.

Some of them related to matters which were more remote, as the wars for inſtance, which Chriſt foretold, the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the diſperſion of the *Jews*.

Laſtly, There were ſome whoſe accompliſhment was at a very great diſtance, after many ages, ſome of them reaching to the end of the world.

One ſee's plainly that this mixture of our Saviour's predictions, which are of ſo very different ſorts, is of uſe to confirm the belief, and aſcertain the truth of them, the exact fulfilling of the firſt oracle making way for the belief and expectation of the ſecond, and ſo on, till all be fulfilled.

One may obſerve afterwards, That Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles, on whom he (according to his promiſe) after his aſcenſion, poured forth the ſpirit of prophecy, did ordinarily follow the ſame notions and expreſſions which the Prophets of the *Old Teſtament* made uſe of.

Thus we find Jeſus Chriſt makes uſe of *Daniel*'s notions, where he ſpeaks of the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; thus we ſee that he imitates the moſt illuſtrious actions of the Prophets, and to make his predictions the more obſerved, in accompliſhing the prophecy of *Zachariah* on *Palm-Sunday*, in the midſt of the acclamations of the people he weeps over *Jeruſalem*, as if its deſtruction were already come. Thus Jeſus Chriſt ſaith to S. *Peter*, *When thou ſhalt be old, another ſhall guide thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldeſt not* (*u*); thus foretelling his death; thus he inſtructs him in the calling of the *Gentiles* under a repreſentation of all ſorts of beaſts, commanding him alſo, even as to the impure animals, *Slay and eat*. All the *Revelations* are full of ſuch prophetical idea's taken from the *Old Teſtament*, from *Geneſis*, *Iſaiah*, *Ezechiel*, *Zachariah*, &c.

(*u*) Joh. xxi. 18.

But here are other reflexions of as great importance as the former.

The firſt is, That the greateſt part of theſe predictions are nothing but a continuance and more diſtinct explication of the oracles of the *Old Teſtament*, concerning the ſufferings of the Meſſiah, the calling of the *Gentiles*, the deſtruction of the commonwealth of the *Jews*; and beſides, they are continued to the laſt day of the world, which is the end of prophecy.

The ſecond is, That theſe predictions had not the leaſt probability upon which they might rationally have been grounded. What likelyhood was there, that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould be crucified, he who raiſed the dead, who commanded the ſea and winds, he whom they would have taken by force to make him their king? What likelyhood was there, that the Apoſtles, a company of poor miſerable *Jews*, ſhould bring over the *Gentiles* to the religion of a man who was accurſed by the ſynagogue of the *Jews*, and crucified like a ſlave by the authority of the *Roman* magiſtrate? What probability was there of the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, whilſt the *Jews*, accuſtom'd to the *Roman* yoke, made it their buſineſs to avoid all manner of occaſions that might ſtir up the indignation of their maſters againſt them. *It is expedient*, ſay they, *rather that one man periſh* (meaning Jeſus) *than to hazard the welfare of the whole nation.*

The third is, That theſe oracles were written by the Apoſtles, not only amongſt diſcourſes of another nature, but alſo linked together in ſuch a chain, that their connexion will not permit us to believe that they were contrived after the matters which they relate to, were paſt, and alſo that they are conſtantly related by three Evangeliſts, long time before the things came to paſs, S. *John* being the only witneſs of the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*.

The fourth is, That theſe oracles gave the Apoſtles as much grounds to expect calamities and violent deaths, as to Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, ſo that there is no pretence of doubting that they were not faithfully recorded by the Evangeliſts, and that therefore ſeeing the accompliſhment has exactly anſwered to the oracle, we ought to look upon them as Divine oracles.

I confeſs that theſe oracles, no more than the books of the *New Teſtament*, were ever committed to the publick cuſtody of the *Jews*, as formerly the oracles of the Prophets of old were, but this cannot really diminiſh their authority.

I will not obſerve at preſent, that becauſe the temple was to be burnt, it was not proper to depoſe them there; and 'twas for this reaſon God thought fit to cauſe the oracles of the *Old Teſtament* to be tranſlated long before.

Nor yet, that it was very proper that theſe predictions, as well as the books of the *New Teſtament*, ſhould be put into the hands of the *Gentiles*, who thence-forward were to be the people of God, and his temple.

But this I obſerve, That nothing can be imagined more ſolemn than theſe prophecies of our Saviour and his Diſciples, as well as never any thing was more exactly fulfilled.

Jeſus Chriſt was born at *Bethlehem* according to the oracles. Now as no man is maſter of the place of his birth, ſo it is plain that here is

no

no room left for impoſture; neither is a man any more the maſter of his death; wherefore to give a certain character to his prophecy, he foretells his dying at *Jeruſalem*; which accordingly was accompliſhed in all its circumſtances; can any thing be more exact?

But one may ſay, That it was eaſie for the Diſciples to forge predictions ſuitable to the event, in like manner as *Virgil* hath done in the ſixth of his *Æneids* of *Marcellus*. One may indeed contrive an impoſture which ſhall be poſſible, and which may anſwer to ſome few oracles; but I ſhall hereafter ſhew the folly of that thought, when I come to prove the faithfulneſs of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts.

But can we conceive ſuch a ſuſpicion concerning the converſion of the *Gentiles*, the ruin of Paganiſm, the victory of Chriſtianity after ten perſecutions. 'Tis now above 1600 years that the Chriſtian Religion ſubſiſts, whereas, who could have aſſured the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt that their doctrine would have had ſo much as one or two followers after their death? The greateſt empires, that of the *Chaldeans*, of the *Perſians*, of the *Grecians*, and that of the *Romans*, have been overturned, and none of them ſingly have been of ſo long continuance as the kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt, which nevertheleſs was attack'd by all that was great and powerful in the world. Who ſee's not that this is the empire whereof *Daniel* ſpeaks in the ſeventh of his Revelations, *which was never to have end.*

Jeſus Chriſt foretold, as it is ſet down by his Diſciples, according to the prophecy of *Daniel*, that the temple of *Jeruſalem* ſhould be deſtroyed, and never built again: who could tell the Apoſtles, if they had forged this oracle themſelves, that the endeavours of *Julian* to confound this prophecy, when he began to rebuild the temple, would be in vain, as indeed they proved by an effect of the Divine vengeance againſt the *Jews*, who were engaged in the rebuilding of it, under the authority of that emperour (*x*).

Indeed if one reflects on the oracles of Jeſus Chriſt, one ſhall find them a thouſand times more known than thoſe of the *Jews*.

1. The greateſt part of them were penn'd at one and the ſame time.

2. They were writ by ſeveral authors, who lived in different places.

3. They were read over the whole earth every Lord's day, they have been explained and commented upon ſoon after, every one endeavouring to take notice of their accompliſhment.

4. They have been alledged in diſputes againſt *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and have ſerved for a foundation to the faith of the Chriſtian church, whoſe teachers have made it their buſineſs to ſhew their uniformity with the oracles of the *Old Teſtament*, which are in the hands of the *Jews*, tho' the *Jews* have always conſidered the Chriſtians as their moſt mortal enemies.

But one may alſo find that theſe oracles, being for the moſt part much more clear and expreſs, their accompliſhment alſo hath been ſo much the more eaſily diſcernible: from whence it evidently follows, That Jeſus Chriſt ought to be acknowledged *as the Prophet that was like unto* Moſes, as is mentioned in the eighteenth of *Deuteronomy*, that is indeed the *true Meſſiah*.

(*x*) *Ammian. Marcellin.* lib. 23.

CHAP. XII.

That JESUS CHRIST *died preciſely in the ſame Manner as it was foretold that the* MESSIAH *ſhould dye.*

I HAVE ſhewed in my third part, that God had given to his church ſeveral oracles to explain diſtinctly this great truth concerning the Meſſiah.

1. He had ſet this up for a rule by *Moſes*, *Curſed is he that hangeth on a tree.*

2. He had propoſed by *David* the idea of the Meſſiah, as having his hands and feet pierced; the *Gentiles* and *Jews* uniting themſelves againſt him.

3. He had foretold by *Iſaiah* that the Meſſiah was to be accounted a malefactor, and put to death.

4. He had repeated the ſame idea's by the Prophet *Zechariah*, who deſcribes the manner of his being pierced, which has a natural reference to the notion of crucifixion.

I have alſo ſet down the reaſons for which God ſeparated the ſeveral parts of thoſe prophetical deſcriptions of ſo ſurprizing an event; the difficulty there was on the one hand to make theſe idea's to be received, which ſeem full of contradictions; the Meſſiah having been at firſt ſet forth as the Fountain of Bleſſing: and on the other hand, their ſeeming incompatibility with the glory which God had promiſed to the Meſſiah, and by him to the *Iſraelites*.

And at laſt, I have ſhowed that theſe oracles do exactly and clearly deſcribe the things which were to happen to the Meſſiah, which was to be ſo, becauſe of the nature of theſe events, which were ſo ſtrange, and at ſuch a diſtance from the common idea's which men have for the moſt part of ſuch things.

Our buſineſs therefore only is to conſider at preſent, whether indeed Jeſus Chriſt died in the ſame manner as the Prophets had foretold that the Meſſiah ſhould.

This character is a very illuſtrious one to confirm that Jeſus Chriſt is the Meſſiah. For it is well known that a priſoner is no longer maſter of the things that happen to him, neither of the kind of his death, nor of the manner of his burial.

In ſhort, nothing can be imagin'd more fooliſh than to ſuppoſe that the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt ſhould apply to their maſter, that he might paſs for the Meſſiah, ſuch oracles as had not uſually been applyed to the Meſſiah by the *Jews*, amongſt whom they lived, and whom they endeavoured to diſpoſe for the receiving of Jeſus Chriſt as the promiſed Meſſiah.

Now we cannot conceive any thing more exact than the agreement which we find between the prophecies and the event.

1. When Jeſus Chriſt by his triumphant entry into *Jeruſalem*, riding on an aſs, had put his Diſciples in mind of one paſſage in *Zachary*, he obliged them alſo to caſt their eyes upon another, when he foretold his death,

death, and their flight, as the accompliſhment of this oracle, *I will ſmite the ſhepherd, and the flock ſhall be ſcattered*, Zach. XIII. 7. (*y*).

2. He was beſet with a band of *Roman* ſouldiers, and the ſervants of the principal men amongſt the *Jews*, who apprehended him, under the conduct of *Judas*; which exactly anſwers, 1. To the deſcription which we find *Pſal.* XXII. *Dogs*, that is Heathens, whom the *Jews* treated as ſuch, *and ſtrong Bulls*, that is *Jews*, repreſented by clean Beaſts, *have beſet me round.* And ſecondly, to that other prophecy, *He that eats bread with me hath lift up his heel againſt me.*

3. He offers himſelf freely to death, according to that of *Iſaiah*, That he *gave his ſoul an offering for ſin.* This appears not only by his going into the garden, where he knew that he ſhould be taken; but alſo by his telling the ſouldiers that he was the man they looked for; he oppoſed S. *Peter's* attempts towards his reſcue, and declares that he did not fly from death, but was willing to ſatisfie the intent of the prophecies.

4. He is forſaken by his Diſciples, as he himſelf had teſtified of it as foretold by the Prophets, *Zach.* XIII. 7.

5. He is ſtruck on the face before *Annas*, as *Jeremiah* had foretold *Lament.* III. 30. *He giveth his cheek to him that ſmiteth him.*

6. He appears before *Caiaphas*, ſurrounded by every thing that was great amongſt the *Jews*, whether lawyers or church-men, according to *Pſalm* II.

7. He is ſilent before his unjuſt judges, and neglects to anſwer the accuſations which the falſe witneſſes depoſed againſt him, according to the prophecy of *Iſaiah*, *As ſheep before his ſhearers is dumb, ſo he openeth not his mouth*, Iſaiah LIII. 7. and the deſcription which *David* gives of him. *Pſ.* XXXI. and XXXIX.

8. They opened their mouths againſt him, in accuſing him of blaſphemy, as *David* had figuratively expreſſed it, *Pſal.* XXII. 13.

9. They ſpit in his face, they buffetted and abuſed him the whole night, according to that oracle of *Iſaiah* XLIX. 6.

10. When *Judas* ſaw that Jeſus Chriſt was delivered to *Pilate* by the *Jews*, who demanded his crucifixion, he returned the thirty pieces of ſilver, wherewith they purchaſed the Potters field, afterwards called the Field of Blood, and ſet apart by the *Jews* for the burial of ſtrangers, as was foretold by *Zachariah* XI. 12. and by *Jeremiah* XXXII. 25.

11. He is accuſed before *Pilate*, and brought before *Herod*, without juſtifying himſelf of the crimes laid to his charge, as it is *Pſalm* XXXVIII. and XXVII. 12.

12. *Pilate* and *Herod* agree in conſpiring the death of Jeſus Chriſt, according to the deſcription of *Pſalm* II.

13. *Pilate* deſiring to ſave Jeſus, the *Jews* demand *Barabbas* might be releaſed, and Jeſus puniſhed, as *David* had foretold *Pſalm* XXII. 14.

14. Jeſus Chriſt was ſcourged by *Pilate's* order, which was foretold *Pſalm* XXXVIII. and LXIX. *Iſaiah* LIII. *verſ.* 5. and *Chap.* LXIII.

15. He is brought forth by *Pilate* to the people with an *Ecce Homo*, *Behold the Man*, which was foretold by *Iſaiah*, *When we ſhall ſee him, there is no beauty that we ſhould deſire him, he is deſpiſed and rejected of men, we did eſtem him ſtricken, ſmitten of God and afflicted.*

(*y*) Matth. xxvi. 31.

16. He is afterwards delivered to the ſouldiers, who before they crucified him, inſulted over him with a thouſand indignities, and ſcourged him again, according to the prophecies ſo often before alledged.

17. They cruciſie him with two robbers, which anſwers to that prophecy *Iſaiah* LIII. 12. *He was numbred with tranſgreſſors.*

18. They give him gall and vinegar to drink, as was foretold *Pſalm* LXIX.

19. They pierce his hands and feet in nailing him to the croſs, which anſwers to *Pſalm* XXII. 17, 18.

20. They part his garments, which is repreſented in the ſame *Pſalm*, *verſe* 19. and caſt lots on his veſture, according to the ſame *Pſalm* in the very ſame place.

21. He ſuffers a thouſand reproaches upon the croſs, according to what we find *Pſalm* XXII. *verſe* 8. and *Pſalm* LXIX. *ver.* 8, 10.

22. And in particular the *Jews* and *Scribes* reproach him in the very words of *Pſalm* XXII. *verſe* 8.

23. Jeſus Chriſt cries out, applying to himſelf the beginning of *Pſalm* XXII. *My God! My God! Why haſt thou forſaken me?* as he had before applied to himſelf the prophecy concerning the Meſſiah in the third of *Daniel.*

24. He commends his ſoul into the hands of God, in the very words which we read *Pſalm* XVI.

Theſe are the principal circumſtances of the death of Jeſus Chriſt, which one ſee's to be exactly agreeable to the prophecies going before concerning them: let us now conſider thoſe which followed his death, which we ſhall not find to be leſs particular.

1. The bones of Jeſus Chriſt were not broken, as thoſe of the two thieves, which one may ſee foretold *Pſalm* XXXIV. *verſe* 21.

2. They open'd his ſide with a ſpear, according to the idea of *Zechariah, Chap.* X. *verſe* 12. *They ſhall look upon him whom they have pierced.*

3. His body is buried by *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*, in a new ſepulchre, which anſwers to the prophecy of *Iſaiah, Chap.* LIII.

Theſe remarks do, in my judgment, clearly prove, that in the death of Chriſt all the characters by which the Prophets have diſtinguiſhed the death of the Meſſiah, are actually found.

But that we may yet be more ſenſible how juſtly theſe oracles are applyed to Jeſus Chriſt; here are ſome reflexions upon the application which the Apoſtles make of theſe particular facts which happened to Chriſt, to thoſe oracles which I have now mentioned.

The firſt is, That the relation of theſe facts is joyned with an account of the weakneſs whereinto they all fell; they relate their own flight, and forſaking their maſter, with S. *Peter*'s denying of him, whilſt they ſet down the courage of thoſe women, and that entire love which they ſhewed to the perſon of Jeſus.

The ſecond is, That the account of the accompliſhment of theſe ancient oracles is interwoven with the accompliſhment of thoſe which were uttered by Jeſus Chriſt, which alone are ſufficient to make good his claim.

The third is, That our Saviour did never on any occaſion more openly ſtand to his pretenſion of being the Meſſiah, than when he applyed to himſelf

himſelf thoſe oracles which by their publick conſent were referred to the Meſſiah, which the *Jews* at that time more obſtinately conteſted than ever.

The fourth is, That there never was a more exact deſcription of all circumſtances which might aſſure us of the truth of any relation, than that which the Evangeliſts have given us of the death of Jeſus Chriſt, in which we find the places, the time, the perſons, their diſcourſes, and other things of that nature, ſet down with extream care.

The fifth is, That as this fact, with all its circumſtances, is the moſt exactly deſcribed of any thing that ever was, ſo it was a matter, concerning which it was ſcarce poſſible to impoſe upon any one. All was done in the face of the whole nation, who were met together at their moſt ſolemn feſtival: all was done in the preſence of the ſoveraign Heathen magiſtrate, of the council of the *Jews*, of *Herod*, and of thoſe who followed him to *Jeruſalem*.

The ſixth is, That we find an account of ſome miracles interwoven with this relation of the Evangeliſts concerning the death of Chriſt, and thoſe miracles as publick, and as little ſubject to ſuſpicion, as the death it ſelf of Jeſus Chriſt, if we take the pains to examine them.

They who come to take Jeſus fall down backward to the ground; Jeſus Chriſt reſtores the ear of the high prieſt's ſervant which was cut off: there was darkneſs over all the land from nine a clock in the morning till noon; the vail of the temple is rent. Theſe are miraculous actions, and ſuch as the *Jews* might eaſily have refuted, whereſoever they had been propoſed, if the truth of them had not been beyond all queſtion.

From all theſe remarks it evidently follows, That it is impoſſible to diſpute the application which the Apoſtles make of theſe oracles which are ſo particular to the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, as the true Meſſiah: we find every part of their relation exactly anſwering to the propheſies; how then can any one doubt of their being fulfilled in him? eſpecially ſeeing it is evident by ſo many other proofs that he was indeed the Meſſiah, and that God has been pleaſed ſo many other ways to confirm the ſame truth.

CHAP. XIII.

That JESUS CHRIST *was raiſed again the third Day according to the* PROPHETS, *and afterwards aſcended into Heaven.*

HAVING ſhewed in the foregoing *Chapter* that Jeſus Chriſt was crucified under *Pontius Pilate*, for maintaining that he was the promiſed Meſſiah, I am now to ſhew, that according to the prophecies ſet down in my third part, he roſe again the third day, and afterwards aſcended into heaven. As theſe two facts are the moſt important

portant of all that are contained in the Goſpel, becauſe if they be denied, all the Divine worſhip given to Jeſus Chriſt, by the Apoſtles, and a great number of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who received him for their maſter in matters of religion, is abſolutely unlawful; ſo we ought ſolidly to prove that they are indiſputably true. Of which we ſhall be fully convinced by making ſome obſervations upon the relation which the Evangeliſts give us concerning them, and we ſhall eaſily find therein all the characters of truth.

There is no neceſſity of obſerving, that a reſurrection from the dead, is a fact which can hardly be believed; and that tho' the *Jews* did not all of them look upon it as an impoſſible thing, yet there were *Sadduces* amongſt them, whoſe doctrine was publickly taught. It is certain, that tho' the Diſciples had ſeen Jeſus Chriſt, raiſing three perſons from the dead, and amongſt others *Lazarus*, a little before his death, yet we find that they were not thereby more diſpoſed to believe that Chriſt was to riſe from the dead.

In ſhort, tho' the Evangeliſts tell us, that Jeſus Chriſt himſelf had foretold, that he was to riſe again the third day, which was a thing ſo commonly known, that the prieſts to elude the propheſie, deſired of *Pilate*, that a guard might be ſet on Jeſus his grave, yet they expreſly tell us, that the Diſciples, none excepted, were in ſuch a conſternation at the death of Jeſus Chriſt, that they had entirely loſt the hopes of ſeeing the accompliſhment of that propheſie. Some pious women, who had accompanied him to the croſs, and were deſirous to ſhew ſome marks of their veneration after his death, came indeed to his ſepulchre, but with ſpices to embalm his dead body, ſo far were they from expecting to find him riſen from the dead. Tho' theſe holy women were convinced of the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, by the apparition of an angel, by the diſcourſe of our Saviour himſelf, and by the repetition of his order, that they ſhould go to *Galilee*, where they ſhould ſee him, yet the relation which they give of theſe things, is accounted fabulous, ſo that two only of all the Apoſtles had the curioſity to go to the grave and inform themſelves. Here is a great unbelief amongſt the Apoſtles, which was to be cured: this was a condition wholly inconſiſtent, if we ſuppoſe them impoſtors, and that they intended to impoſe upon the world.

A ſecond thing we may obſerve is, That as the incredulity of our Saviour's own Diſciples was extraordinary, ſo we cannot imagine any more efficacious means than were employed to overcome this their doubtfulneſs. If one joyns the relations of the Evangeliſts together, one may find ſeveral degrees of evidence, in thoſe proofs which confirm the truth of the reſurrection of our Saviour.

The firſt is the manner of their being informed of the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt; Angels at firſt declare his reſurrection to ſome women; Jeſus Chriſt afterwards appears to *Mary Magdalen*, all alone; afterwards he appears only to two of his Diſciples, then to St. *Peter*, afterwards he appears to ſeven of them at once, then to all his Diſciples except *Thomas*, and ſoon after to the eleven, *Thomas* being one of them. After all this, he appears to a greater number of his followers, till at laſt, having been ſeveral times ſeen of them all, he appears to them all aſſembled together, and is taken up into heaven in their ſight. It is evident, that

as

as they were informed of this truth one after another, ſo they were more obliged to examine the fact more attentively when Jeſus Chriſt appeared to them.

The ſecond degree has relation to thoſe marks and characters, by which they were aſſured, that it was Jeſus Chriſt himſelf. The Angels repeat to the women the command which Jeſus Chriſt before his death had given to his Diſciples to go into *Galilee*; Jeſus Chriſt appearing to *Mary Magdalen* repeats the ſame to her, and gives her a particular commiſſion for S. *Peter*, to comfort him in his affliction, for having denied his maſter. Appearing to his Diſciples as they went to *Emmaus*, he refers them to the prophecies, which ſpoke of his death and reſurrection; and moreover, when he broke bread with them, they hear the ſame prayers which he ordinarily uſed at the bleſſing of it. He appears to them the ſame day the fifth time, and ſhews them his feet and his hands; he repeats the grant of the authority which the Father had given him; he breathes upon them, ſaying, *Receive the Holy Ghoſt*; a week after he lets *Thomas* touch him; he appears afterward to ſeven of his Apoſtles upon the lake of *Tiberias*, where he confirms S. *Peter* in his charge, from which his denying of Chriſt might ſeem to have excluded him, after he had wrought a miracle in the draught of the fiſhes, which was like ſome miracles which he had wrought before his death. Afterwards he appears upon the ſame mountain in *Galilee*, where in all probability he had been transfigured before, and is there ſeen of five hundred of his Diſciples at once. And laſt of all he appears to them at *Jeruſalem*, after their return from *Galilee*, and from thence goes with them to *Bethany*, where after he had told them of the abſolute power which God had given them, he commands them to go and baptize in his name, he foretels the miracles which they ſhould work, and the gifts which they ſhould receive at *Jeruſalem*. All theſe ſo very different circumſtances were only deſign'd to aſſure their eyes, their hands, their minds, their conſciences, that was the ſame Jeſus whom they had always followed.

It is worth our taking notice of the diverſity of theſe circumſtances for the certainty of this fact, which abſolutely prevent all pretences of doubtfulneſs. Jeſus Chriſt appears ten ſeveral times after his death; he appears five times on the very day of his reſurrection; he appears at ſeveral hours, to different perſons, in ſeveral places, but always to perſons to whom he was familiarly known, to thoſe who were not at all credulous; the firſt news they had of his reſurrection ſeem'd only to raiſe their ſcruples, if the teſtimony of their ſenſes, which ſaw him and touched him, had not removed all ſuſpicions. Jeſus Chriſt appears to them in places where he had wrought many miracles, and where he had often before converſed with them.

But one may make another more important reflexion, upon the time and the day wherein our Saviour roſe again. Of the ten ſeveral times in which he appeared to his Diſciples, he appeared five times on the day of his reſurrection; he appeared to them eight days after, and after that, the eighth day, which he ſignalized by his frequent appearing to his Diſciples, was conſecrated to celebrate the memory of this event every week: one finds certain tokens hereof in the writings of the Apoſtles, and it is known that all Chriſtians after them did inviolably obſerve this law.

Now

Now let any one conſider whether it would have been poſſible to introduce this cuſtom in the time of the Apoſtles, if the reſurrection of Chriſt had not been a fact confeſſed of all hands. Can any one conceive that the Apoſtles and their Diſciples, who were witneſſes of the death of Jeſus Chriſt, and who celebrated the memory thereof by a ſacrament, could have been ſo ſtupid to eſtabliſh a cuſtom which would put people upon examining the fact, and have convinced them in a little time, ſince none of thoſe that followed them would have ſubmitted to this practiſe, if they had not been convinced by their eyes, and their other ſenſes, and by a thouſand other proofs of the truth of ſo capital a fact, which was ſo much diſputed by the *Jews*, of which they were obliged to make a ſolemn commemoration two and fifty times every year, as long as they liv'd.

Let us add to this remark, which we have elſewhere urged, with reference to the creation, another reflexion upon a fact which the Evangeliſts tell us: they tell us that tho' the reſurrection of Chriſt was accompanied with very peculiar circumſtances, ſufficient to convince both *Jews* and *Gentiles* of the truth of it, being uſher'd in with an earthquake, with appatitions of Angels to the ſouldiers that guarded the ſepulchre of Jeſus, and were frighted thereby, yet the council of the *Jews* contrived, with the ſouldiers, a moſt impudent lye to out face it, and accordingly the ſouldiers coming before *Pilate*, tell him that the Diſciples had ſtoln away the body of Jeſus whilſt they ſlept, and his Diſciples tell us, that ſince this hath been the common opinion of the *Jews*.

I will not ſo much as take notice here of the palpable falſity of this depoſition; for if the ſouldiers were aſleep, how could they depoſe concerning a fact which was done at that time: if they were not aſleep, why did not they hinder the Diſciples from taking the body of their maſter away? How could they affirm that thieves had taken him away, when the linnen clothes wherein his body was ſhrouded, being left in the grave, and the napkin that was about his head, being folded up in a place by it ſelf, do abſolutely evince that he was not taken away by perſons that were in fear of a ſurprize? What probability is there, in ſhort, to ſuſpect that his Diſciples, who forſook Jeſus Chriſt whilſt he was yet alive, who fled from him at that time, ſhould undertake ſuch a hazardous attempt to have his body only?

Neither will I inſiſt upon a repreſentation of the Apoſtles ſincerity, which made them give us in their hiſtories a plain account of the report which was ſpread againſt the belief of the reſurrection of Jeſus, before ever that the Diſciples had atteſted the ſame.

But I obſerve another very particular character in their relation, which is, that it was impoſſible for them to eſtabliſh this fact of the reſurrection, without accuſing thereby the whole council of the *Jews*, of the moſt ſhameful and crying impoſture that ever was; to write a thing of this nature againſt the heads of that religion, was to ſacrifice themſelves to the hatred of the publick, and to expoſe themſelves to inevitable ruin. In ſhort, let us imagine whether after a charge of this nature, it was eaſie for the Apoſtles to publiſh their books, and preach publickly that Jeſus Chriſt was riſen from the dead? And yet this was what they did with a ſurprizing diligence when they inſerted this terrible accuſation

into

into their books and ſermons; which alone is ſufficient to demonſtrate that they were infinitely convinced of the reſurrection, and alſo in a condition to convince all gainſayers, as we ſhall ſhew hereafter.

One may add to this proof the converſion of S. *Paul*, and the care which he afterwards took to confirm this truth of the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt. He was a declared enemy of Jeſus Chriſt, and of the Chriſtian religion, and yet ſoon after the death of Chriſt he preaches him up for the Meſſiah: How came this ſuddain change? He aſſerts that he had ſeen in heaven this Jeſus who was riſen from the dead, and received from him the Apoſtleſhip; accordingly we find him preaching by theſe orders, without any communication had with the firſt Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt. He relates theſe matters in a manner ſo little affected to advance his miniſtry in the minds of the *Galatians*, who preferred S. *Peter*, and the other Apoſtles before him, that there is no ground left to doubt of them.

One ought to make a like reflexion upon the converſion of *Cornelius* the centurion; he was a proſelyte, that is a *Gentile* by birth, but a *Jew* by profeſſion, and by the imployment he was in, he had occaſion of being more particularly informed of the depoſition of the ſouldiers, who probably were not unknown to him, for he was in the garriſon at *Cæſarea*, which was not far from *Jeruſalem*. Yet however this *Cornelius*, after he had a viſion which commanded him to ſend to *Joppa*, a place made famous, becauſe *Jonah* the Prophet ſet ſail from thence, who was a type of the Meſſiah in his death and reſurrection; this *Cornelius*, I ſay, embraced the Chriſtian Religion, becomes the firſt Biſhop of *Cæſarea*, and dyed a martyr for the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt.

The great affection which S. *Luke* had for S. *Paul* confirms the ſame truth. S. *Luke* had never ſeen our Saviour, he was born at *Antioch*, where in all probability he exercis'd his profeſſion of phyſick, yet he was converted to Chriſtianity, and follow'd S. *Paul* in all places, and writ the hiſtory of his miracles and preaching: who doubts but that the reaſon hereof was, becauſe he had ſeen the dead whom Chriſt had raiſed to life, and had ſeen S. *Paul*, whom Jeſus Chriſt had dignified with the Apoſtleſhip, raiſe others alſo from the dead.

It is certain that thoſe who were firſt convinced by the relation of the Apoſtles, muſt needs have had very evident proofs of the truth of it.

The *Jews* had *Sadducees* amongſt them, who denied the poſſibility of the reſurrection in general; the council of the *Jews* eſpecially had made it their buſineſs to decry the conduct, the doctrine, and the miracles of Jeſus Chriſt, and in particular to make the belief of his reſurrection ſuſpected; and ſo much the more becauſe Jeſus Chriſt had foretold it, and his Apoſtles maintained that it was come to paſs accordingly. If in oppoſition to theſe ſtrong prejudices, there had only been the depoſition of two or three perſons to confirm this fact, there would have been reaſon to doubt of it; but we find that this thing, which of it ſelf ſeems hard to be believed, and was otherwiſe ſo much conteſted, is, 1. Proved by ten ſeveral apparitions; 2. It is atteſted by above five hundred Diſciples; 3. It was publickly preached by the Diſciples of Chriſt at *Jeruſalem* it ſelf, and throughout all *Judea*, where it was moſt of all diſputed: 4. It was received by the very enemies of Jeſus Chriſt, as S. *Paul* and *Cornelius*,

nelius, and by thouſands of thoſe, who having demanded his death, were converted by the preaching of the Apoſtles: 5. It was confirmed by the martyrdom of the greateſt part of them; and 6. It was not only authorized by the preſence of the three perſons whom Chriſt had raiſed to life, and who lived one of them at *Bethany*, fifteen furlongs from *Jeruſalem*, where Jeſus aſcended to heaven; another at *Naim*, *&c.* But it was further verified by ſeveral reſurrections wrought by the Apoſtles, to whom Chriſt had vouchſafed that aſtoniſhing power.

It was alſo a very conſiderable thing that the commonwealth of the *Jews* continued near forty years after the time that the Apoſtles undertook openly to preach up the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt as the capital article of their religion; and yet in all that time it was never oppoſed by any publick writing either of the *Jews* or *Gentiles*. If the *Jews* in their unjuſt intrigues againſt Jeſus Chriſt and his religion, endeavoured to abuſe the world in this matter, with calumniating ſtories, neither have the Apoſtles been wanting to accuſe the principal men of their nation of impoſture, and they have deſpiſed the moſt cruel of their puniſhments, to maintain the juſtice of their charge; and yet none of them would undertake to juſtifie the calumnies of their council, tho' they ſaw Chriſtianity ſpreading it ſelf not only over all *Judea*, but in all parts of the world. To ſpeak of it, as it is, this conduct of theirs was a manifeſt betraying of their cauſe, or rather an open acknowledgment that what they had publiſhed againſt the innocency of the Diſciples, and the truth of the reſurrection of Jeſus was without all ground.

I foreſee only one probable difficulty which can be oppoſed to the ſolidity of theſe reflexions. A *Jew* may demand, why Jeſus Chriſt after his reſurrection did not converſe as openly amongſt the *Jews* as before, that ſo he might have been known by thoſe who had crucified him, which would have put the truth of the reſurrection out of doubt?

But to ſpeak truth, this objection is not reaſonable; for 1. Jeſus Chriſt had threatned the unbelieving *Jews*, they ſhould ſee him no more, and he ought to make good his threatning. 2. Who ſees not that they would have looked upon his appearing amongſt them as a phantaſtick apparition, after they had ſeen him work ſo many miracles, and had attributed them to the devil. 3. I ſay that ſuch an apparition was not agreeable to our Saviour's doctrine in the parable of the rich man; *They have* Moſes *and the Prophets, if they hear not them, neither will they be perſwaded tho' one roſe from the dead* (z). 4. Jeſus Chriſt having for the moſt part converſed in *Galilee* at *Nazareth* and *Capernaum*, it was to the *Galileans* and his Diſciples that he was chiefly to ſhew himſelf, to be acknowledged by them, as being the perſons who were particularly to bear witneſs of this truth. After ſo ſtrong a preſumption as the governours of that people had of Chriſt's reſurrection, founded upon the earthquake which accompanied it, and upon the depoſition of the ſouldiers to whom the Angels had appeared, had not they all the reaſon in the world to believe the teſtimony of the Apoſtles concerning this truth, which they heard ſeveral times atteſted by them in full council, and ſaw confirm'd by miraculous cures which they could not queſtion in the leaſt.

Laſtly, Is not this objection the moſt ridiculous thing in the world? For

(z) Luke xvi. 29, 31.

For let us ſuppoſe that theſe conſiderations are not ſtrong enough to juſtifie our Saviour's conduct when he gave theſe proofs of his reſurrection, doth it follow that becauſe he did not make choice of means (in order to perſwade the *Jews*) which they preferr'd before others uſed by him, without any ſolid reaſon, that therefore we muſt reject the depoſition of ſo many witneſſes who unanimouſly atteſt it? Since Jeſus Chriſt had raiſed three perſons to life again, which then lived in *Judea*; ſince *Jeruſalem* had continued fourty years after the death of Chriſt; ſince ſixty ſolemn feaſts were celebrated in that time, where all the *Jews* had an occaſion to examine the truth of theſe facts, and the truth or falſity of the accuſation charged upon the Apoſtles by the council of the *Jews*, and that multitudes of *Jews* and *Gentiles* were converted at the preaching of the Apoſtles, who reduced all to this queſtion of the fact of the reſurrection of our Saviour, is not this an invincible proof againſt all the accuſations and ſuſpicions of the Synagogue?

Foraſmuch as the witneſſes who maintain the reſurrection of Chriſt, are the very ſame that atteſt his aſcenſion into heaven, and that they aſſert it with the ſame proofs, and the ſame zeal, the reflexions here ſet down may ſerve for that alſo, and the rather becauſe I am next to conſider the ſending of the gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, which is an undeniable proof, both of the reſurrection of Chriſt and his aſcenſion; and that theſe very gifts of the Holy Spirit enabled the *Jews* to write, preach, and publiſh throughout all the world the truths of that Chriſtianity which we now profeſs.

CHAP. XIV.

That Jesus Christ *ſent to his Apoſtles, and to the Primitive Chriſtians, the miraculous Gifts of his* Holy Spirit, *as he had promiſed in the Ancient Prophecies.*

I HAVE ſhewn that the prophecies of the *Old Teſtament* ſpeak very plainly of this ſending of the Spirit, as a preliminary to the calling of the *Gentiles*, which was the great deſign of God. The Prophet *Joel* ſpeaks of it as ſuch, and makes this wonder to precede the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, as S. *Peter* obſerves in the ſecond of the *Acts*. *Iſaiah* ſpeaks very particularly of it as ſuch, in the eleventh *Chapter* of his prophecy, where he ſufficiently intimates that the ſpirit of prophecy ſhould from thence forward ſo reſt upon Jeſus Chriſt, that it would not be found any longer among the *Jews*, whoſe city and temple ſhould be deſtroyed.

At preſent my buſineſs is to ſhew that this thing has been exactly fulfilled, according to the deſign which God had laid down in the Prophets. To be convinc'd of this, we need only make ſome reflexions upon the relation which S. *Luke* gives us of it in the *Acts*.

He

He tells us therefore, that fifty days only after the death of Jeſus Chriſt, the Apoſtles having continued at *Jeruſalem*, and being aſſembled there, they received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, that is, the power of ſpeaking all ſorts of languages, to make them fit to preach the Goſpel to all nations, and to explain the moſt ſublime myſteries of our Saviour's religion.

Every thing is conſiderable in this relation of S. *Luke*: 1. That he relates this fact as happening fifty days only after the Jewiſh paſſover, when Chriſt was crucified; the whole nation of the *Jews* having been witneſſes of his death. 2. That he relates it as happening in the ſame city where Jeſus Chriſt was condemned, that the ſame multitude, who after fifty days were again aſſembled there at this feaſt, might be witneſſes of this miraculous event. In ſhort, it plainly appears that this new law from mount *Sion*, was ſolemnly promulg'd in the preſence of all the *Jews*, who were aſſembled from all parts of the world, as the old law was, when all the people aſſiſted at the foot of mount *Sinai*. 3. That theſe gifts were granted to all the Diſciples of our Saviour; gifts, which till that time had been wholly unheard of, and whereof ſome part only had been granted to ſome Prophets, and to ſome Prieſts, and of which none had been made partakers ſince the time of *Malachi*; God having ſo ordered it, that the deſires of the *Jews* might be the more inflamed for the Meſſiah's coming, as alſo that upon his coming he might the more eaſily be diſcerned. 4. That this was a fact openly known amongſt the *Jews*, and differently interpreted by them; ſome ſaying, *They were full of new wine*. 5. That the Apoſtles aſſerted by the mouth of S. *Peter*, that this was an accompliſhment of the ancient oracles, as well as of the promiſes of Jeſus Chriſt. 6. That they declared that the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, his aſcenſion into heaven, and this miraculous donative, had been foretold by *David* and *Joel*. 'Tis certainly therefore very natural to make theſe following reflexions upon the relation of ſo conſiderable an event.

The firſt will confirm the truth of this miraculous fact, if we conſider that it is abſurd to ſuppoſe that S. *Luke*, a wiſe man, ſhould be ſo raſh, as to relate a matter of this nature, if he had not been fully convinc'd of it; and if it had not been an eaſie thing to have convinc'd his readers thereof alſo; nothing more being required for their conviction, but the preſence of one of thoſe firſt Chriſtians, and to make a trial of this ſupernatural vertue beſtowed on them, for which there were frequent occaſions.

2. We muſt obſerve that this relation of S. *Luke* is as it were the foundation which he lays down, to make his book of the *Acts* to appear juſt and reaſonable, and to juſtifie the Apoſtles conduct in preaching the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, not only contrary to the opinion of the *Jews*, who looked upon them as wholly excluded from the priviledges of the covenant; but alſo contrary to the ſeeming maxim of Jeſus Chriſt, who acted only as the miniſter of circumciſion; and contrary to the pretenſions of many Chriſtians, who after the miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, took it very ill that *S. Peter* had preached to the *Gentiles*.

3. S. *Luke* ſuppoſes that this fact came to paſs in ſuch a manner, that it was followed by conſequences as illuſtrious as they were incredible. Twelve poor fiſhermen undertook to go and preach to all the world, that

that their maſter, who fifty days before was crucified at *Jeruſalem*, at the proſecution of the whole Synagogue, and by order of one of the magiſtrates of the *Roman* empire, was not only living, not only aſcended into heaven, but that he alſo had given them the power of ſpeaking all ſorts of languages, of curing all diſeaſes, and even of raiſing the dead.

4. They go yet further, they boldly maintain that Jeſus Chriſt had given them a priviledge of communicating the ſame power to all thoſe who would believe that he was the promiſed Meſſiah, and this without any other myſtery but the bare laying on of their hands, after they had received them by baptiſm into the profeſſion of Chriſtianity.

Nothing could have been more eaſie than to convince them of the contrary, unleſs they had confirmed the truth of their aſſertion by the miraculous conſequences of that firſt miracle. The fact was publickly acknowledged; *Simon Magus* is convinced thereof, and he who had made himſelf famous by his ſorceries, becomes a Diſciple. S. *Luke* in a hiſtory of the actions of thirty years, relates the continual miracles wrought by the Apoſtles, and particularly by S. *Paul*, whom he conſtantly followed.

It ſeems to me, that if one conſiders the hiſtory it ſelf, and the perſon who made it, that it will appear to be a true and faithful relation; however there are other teſtimonies which invincibly eſtabliſh the ſame truth.

1. The Goſpel was in effect eſtabliſhed in moſt of the provinces and great cities of the *Roman* empire. S. *Paul* writes to the Chriſtians of *Theſſalonica*, *Corinth*, and *Epheſus*, to the *Galatians*, *Coloſſians*, *&c.* which is an evident argument that there were Chriſtians every where, that is, Diſciples of theſe twelve fiſhermen, who underſtood nothing but their native *Syriack* language; how then were all theſe nations converted, without ſuppoſing the truth of the miracle at the *Pentecoſt?*

2. The Apoſtles ſpeak to them of theſe miraculous gifts as of a common thing; S. *Paul* employing ſome part of his firſt epiſtle to the *Corinthians* to regulate thoſe diſorders which aroſe in the church, by reaſon of the abuſe of thoſe gifts. S. *James* ſpeaks of the power that the prieſts had to cure the ſick; and S. *Paul* wiſhes for an opportunity of going to *Rome*, to communicate thoſe gifts to the *Romans*.

3. They take occaſion to raiſe the dignity of the Goſpel above that of the law, in calling it the miniſtry of the Spirit, in oppoſition to the letter of the law, notwithſtanding the tables of the law had been given to *Moſes* in ſo very illuſtrious a manner.

It is of great moment here to conſider three things, which alone are ſufficient to confirm the truth of the Chriſtian religion.

The firſt is, That this miſſion of the Spirit is alone ſufficient to convince mankind of the Divinity of Jeſus Chriſt. God gave to *Adam* a power of ſpeaking one language, and afterwards he divided the ſame to make a confuſion amongſt the builders of *Babel*; and Jeſus Chriſt doth the ſame thing to confirm the glory and belief of his Divinity. God vouchſafes the power of miracles to ſome, Jeſus Chriſt communicates it to a far greater number; miracles not having been ſo generally wrought, becauſe no people ever had that power in all the foregoing ages. The Father wrought ſo few miracles, that he might leave to the Son this means of

making himſelf known. The Son had the glory of pouring forth the Holy Ghoſt, in a greater abundance than the Father, thereby to ſupply the ſhame of his humiliation. This is the true reaſon why the Scripture ſaith, That *the Spirit was not yet given, becauſe Jeſus Chriſt was not yet glorified.*

The ſecond is, That from this miracle one ought to infer theſe two concluſions; the firſt is, That God was fully pacified by the ſacrifice of Jeſus Chriſt, the Apoſtles conſtantly repreſenting the paſſion of our Saviour as a ſacrifice offer'd by him. The other is, That from that time forward mankind was conſecrated to God at his temple. Jeſus Chriſt in his prayer before his death expreſſes himſelf much in the ſame manner as *Solomon* did at his dedication of the firſt temple, and fire from heaven falls down on his ſacrifice: Jeſus Chriſt conſecrates his Apoſtles to be the living ſtones of his temple, and cauſes the heavenly flames to fall down upon them, as had formerly been granted at *Solomon*'s dedication of the firſt temple.

The third is, That the *Jews* themſelves cannot conceive a more glorious or magnificent accompliſhment of the ancient oracles concerning the effuſion of the Holy Spirit at the time of the Meſſiah, than what we find related by S. *Luke*, whereof the whole world may ſee the viſible effects, in the calling of the *Gentiles* to the Chriſtian religion: from whence one may rationally conclude, That Jeſus Chriſt muſt be acknowledged for the Meſſiah whom God had promiſed.

CHAP. XV.

That according to the Prophecies, the Apoſtles of JESUS CHRIST *have called the* GENTILES *to the Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Religion.*

WE have already ſeen what was the deſign of God, and that the diſtinction which he made of the *Jews* from other nations, was only that the Meſſiah might by that means be the more certainly known, in whom all mankind had a right, as being promiſed to *Adam.*

God renew'd the idea of this truth in a very lively manner, when he aſſured *Abraham*, before he gave him the law of circumciſion, *That in his ſeed all nations ſhould be bleſſed.* *Jacob* enlightned by the ſpirit of prophecy on his death-bed, plainly takes this truth for granted, when he ſays that the Meſſiah, whom he calls *Shiloh*, was to be the expectation of the *Gentiles*, *Gen.* XLIX. Why doth he not ſay, That he was to be the expectation of the *Jews?* but becauſe he ſuppoſeth that they were to be rejected, and the *Gentiles* called in their ſtead.

One ſee's in the *Pſalms*, and in the Prophets until *Malachi* incluſively, a thouſand declarations of this future calling of the *Gentiles* to the faith

faith of the Meſſiah, and tho' the moſt part of the idea's which the Prophets make uſe of, ſeem to be very figurative, deſcribing the Meſſiah as a conqueror, who was to ſubdue the whole world to his dominion by the force of arms; yet we find a great many others interwoven with them which only relate to the profeſſion of the religion of the Meſſiah, and which, not being capable of any other ſenſe, ſufficiently determine the others, ſo as not to perplex the reader with thoſe ſeeming obſcurities. But Jeſus Chriſt very diſtinctly declares this in divers places, and above all in the XXIV. of S. *Matthew*, *This Goſpel*, ſaith he, *ſhall be preached throughout all the world*.

Now nothing could ever be more exactly fulfilled than theſe ancient oracles have been; let the *Jews* cavil as long as they pleaſe about our application of many of the prophecies of the *Old Teſtament* to our Saviour; let them put a ſenſe upon the Scriptures which treat of this ſubject, contrary to what the *Jews*, who were contemporary with Jeſus Chriſt ever did, and to the moſt of thoſe with whom the firſt Chriſtians, as *Juſtin*, *Tertullian*, and others, from time to time diſputed, yet at leaſt they cannot deny but that the thing has been exactly fulfilled.

It is clearer than the day, that nothing could be more exact: all Chriſtians, from one end of the world to another, worſhip the God of *Iſrael*, according to the prophecy of *Malachi*. Jeſus Chriſt ſubjected them to the moral part of the law of *Moſes*: the *Mahometans* themſelves have learnt of the Chriſtians to acknowledge no other God but the God of *Iſrael*. The multitude of falſe Gods which the world worſhipped, are vaniſhed from all places where Chriſtianity has been planted; and very few are left in compariſon of thoſe which are already deſtroy'd, ſo that we muſt conſider the thing as already gone very far. In truth, while things continue thus, one may reaſonably maintain againſt the *Jews*, that our Jeſus and his Diſciples have taken away all the glory which could be reſerved for that Meſſiah whom they expect. They muſt, if they be jealous for the glory of him whom they look for, endeavour to make the world forſake the worſhip of the God of *Iſrael*, to make way for the accompliſhment of thoſe oracles which can have no place in that ſtate wherein the world is at preſent.

But tho' this reflexion upon the exact accompliſhment of the oracles concerning the call of the *Gentiles* to the religion of the Meſſiah may ſuffice; yet I think my ſelf bound to make ſome further obſervations upon this ſubject. In ſhort, every thing deſerves to be conſidered in this calling of the *Gentiles* to the knowledge of the Goſpel.

I do not take notice at preſent that the perſon firſt employ'd in calling of the *Gentiles* is S. *Peter*, to whom Jeſus Chriſt had promiſed the honour of founding his church amongſt the nations, and who himſelf at firſt thought that the thing was unlawful, and who after a viſion given him for that very purpoſe, obſerves the Jewiſh cuſtoms, and obliges the *Gentiles* to do the ſame. Neither do I obſerve that the firſt who was called was *Cornelius*, a *Roman* officer who reſided at *Cæſarea*, where he became a proſelyte. Behold here a man engaged to examine that, which he had a better opportunity to do than any one elſe, by reaſon of the nature of his charge, whether what the ſouldiers had depoſed concern-

ing the Diſciples ſtealing away the body of our Saviour, were true or no.

I am obliged to confine my ſelf to ſome general reflexions upon this matter. I conſider firſt the difficulty which was upon all accounts in this deſign of the calling of the *Gentiles*, and the prodigious ſucceſs which this call of the *Gentiles* met with according to the Prophets.

To make us underſtand this difficulty better, we need only conſider 1. What were the prejudices of the *Jews*, even thoſe who were become Chriſtians. 2. What was the ſtate of the world at the time of Jeſus Chriſt. The Heathens enjoyed each their ſeveral religions for a longer time than any hiſtory could trace it. They attributed the happineſs of their ſtates and families to their gods. 3. We muſt obſerve the nature of that preaching, by which the *Gentiles* were converted: its ſubject was the ſtrangeſt thing in the world; if the croſs of Jeſus Chriſt had prov'd the ſcandal of the *Jews*, who looked upon the Meſſiah as the fountain of bleſſing, and the croſs as an accurſed puniſhment; it was look'd upon no otherwiſe than as an heap of follies by the *Greeks*, (who boaſted themſelves to be the wiſeſt men of the world) as well as by the other *Gentiles*.

Yet after all this, one ſee's a prodigious ſucceſs, and a ſurprizing extent of this call. Within a little time the world was fill'd with Chriſtians: S. *Paul* writes to thoſe that were in *Aſia*, *Greece*, and *Italy*; S. *Peter* to thoſe of *Pontus*; S. *John* to thoſe who were among the *Parthians*. There were not wanting ſome in the very emperour's court, even that of *Nero*, who put S. *Peter* and S. *Paul* to death in the ſixty ſeventh year of our Lord.

One cannot attend to a ſucceſs of this nature, without being extreamly ſurpriz'd; let us conceive of a dozen, or thereabouts, of poor beggars, a dozen of unlearned men coming out of *Judea*, who ſhould accuſe the whole world of folly and impiety; every one oppoſing them, eſpecially the *Jews*, who were incenſed to ſee them go about to eſtabliſh the belief of the croſs in the world, as a doctrine which would explain the accompliſhment of the promiſes of God concerning the Meſſiah, of thoſe promiſes wherewith the *Jews* had filled all the *Eaſt*, and which had rendred them at this time doubly ridiculous.

When inſtead of perſecuting the Apoſtles, they hearken unto them; or even when in the midſt of chains and priſons they are examined, they declare that true godlineſs conſiſts in knowing Jeſus Chriſt, even the ſame Jeſus who was crucified in *Judea*, for whoſe name's ſake they had been publickly ſcourged by order of the council of the *Jews*. Thus we find S. *Paul* boaſting of his ſevere uſage.

If perſons queſtion them more particularly about the actions of this Jeſus, they anſwer coldly, That the Son of God came down from heaven; that he took upon him our fleſh in the womb of a virgin; that when he was become man, and yet an infant, *Herod* ſought to kill him, to avoid which he was carried into *Egypt*; that after having lived thirty years obſcurely in a carpenter's ſhop, he was taken by the *Jews*, ſcourged, mocked, crowned with thorns, nailed to the croſs, where they gave him vinegar to drink; that there he cried out, *My God, my God, Why haſt thou*

thou forſaken me? that he died, was buried, and roſe again the third day, as he had promiſed before his death.

But what is it that this JESUS teaches to thoſe that would follow him? His Apoſtles in his name require all men to renounce the pleaſures of this life, to abhor polygamy and fornication, and inſtead of revenging an affront, to turn the other cheek to him that ſmites us, and to leave our cloak alſo with him who takes our coat from us; to go two miles with him who conſtrains us to guide him one; to love our enemies, and to wiſh well, and pray for thoſe that deſpitefully uſe us, and perſecute us.

But what rewards will he give to his ſervants? The Apoſtles anſwer, That he promiſes nothing that is conſiderable in this life, but an everlaſting happineſs in the world to come.

It is viſible that nothing ſeems to be worſe contrived to gain credit than this ſtory. The weakneſs of Jeſus Chriſt is viſible, he was crucified; what ground is here to believe that he was able to perform his promiſes? The ſervice he preſcribes is very rough, the reward he propoſes is at a great diſtance, and moreover, it is ſuch as appears very doubtful to thoſe who are not furniſhed with ſtrong impreſſions of the immortality of the ſoul, and of a life to come.

But on the other hand, the Apoſtles ſolidly demonſtrate that he is GOD, and not a meer man, that he can raiſe the dead, and that he can perform his promiſes. Tho' they do not ſay, Bring hither the blind, the lame, and the deaf, and we will heal them in his name; preſent your dead to us, and we will raiſe them in the name of that Jeſus who is born of *Mary*, of that Jeſus who died, and cried out on the croſs, *My God, my God, Why haſt thou forſaken me?* (For I acknowledge that this miraculous power which they had received, was only exerted upon certain occaſions, which the Spirit of God made choice of.) Yet they did that which was equivalent, for when blind men were brought to them, they ſaid, Ye blind, in the name of Jeſus, recover your ſight; and in like manner to the lepers, to poſſeſſed perſons, to the ſick of the palſey, to the dead. Upon this all were converted, and the croſs of Jeſus Chriſt triumphs.

There are three ſorts of people in the world, wiſe men, men of a middle ſort, and ſuch as are of a lower capacity; and ſeveral of theſe three orders of men made profeſſion of the Chriſtian religion, as well amongſt the *Jews* as *Heathens*.

CHAP. XVI.

That the Chriſtian Religion is founded on Proofs of Fact, and that conſequently nothing in the World ſo certain as the Truth of it.

THIS reflexion ought to be made more than once, becauſe there is nothing ſo proper to eſtabliſh the truth of the Chriſtian religion beyond all conteſt, or that will confound Atheiſts, prophane perſons, and *Jews*, who endeavour to oppoſe it more effectually.

I ſay then, that the chief articles on which the whole Chriſtian religion is grounded, are confirm'd by proofs of fact, that is, by witneſſes whoſe evidence cannot be queſtioned, without ſhaking all the certainty which we can have of any thing in this world, and without rejecting all the means whereby we can aſſure ourſelves of the knowledge which we enjoy.

Many particular events which were perfectly divine, happened at the birth of *John the Baptiſt*, the forerunner of the Meſſiah; they were known throughout all the hill country of *Judea*; they happened to a prieſt, that is, a publick perſon; and it was when he was employ'd in his publick function in the temple; they are ſeconded by miracles which were known to the whole nation of the *Jews*; they are follow'd by the publick miniſtry of *John the Baptiſt*, a man who cenſures all *Judea*, who openly declares himſelf the forerunner of the Meſſiah, and who hath a great number of Diſciples, who are diſtinguiſh'd from thoſe of our Saviour, who were ſpread throughout all *Judea*, and who continued after the death of our Saviour; theſe were Diſciples of a man, who beſides all this, doth not keep up any correſpondence with our Saviour, and who at leſt falls by the hand of *Herod* for cenſuring his inceſt and luſts.

JESUS CHRIST is born in *Bethlehem* under *Auguſtus*, a fact of which the *Roman* commiſſioners were witneſſes, and which the records of that empire preſerv'd as long as they were in being.

That the Angels teſtified their joy at his birth, is a fact which was confirm'd by the ſhepherds of *Bethlehem*, long before Jeſus Chriſt had any Diſciples.

That a new ſtar conducted the wiſe men of the *Eaſt* to *Bethlehem*, was an illuſtrious fact, and of which *Herod*, and the prieſts, and great men amongſt the *Jews*, were exactly informed; and the Apoſtles would have found it a very difficult matter to impoſe this upon them, if the thing had not been diſtinctly known.

That the birth of Jeſus Chriſt, and the arrival of the wiſe men affrighted *Herod*, was a publick thing, confirmed by the murther of the infants of *Bethlehem*, and reported to *Auguſtus*, together with the death of *Antipater*; whereof *Macrobius* a Heathen, who was qualified for the knowledge of ſuch a ſtory, hath preſerved the memory. Neither can this fact be called in queſtion, becauſe *Joſephus* makes no mention of it, ſince ſo famous a Heathen atteſts it. *Auguſtus*, ſaith he, *having heard that amongſt the infants which* Herod *the king of the* Jews *had cauſed to be kill'd in* Syria, *under two*

two years of age, he had kill'd his own ſon, ſaid, That it was better to be Herod's *hog than his ſon.*

That Jeſus Chriſt was in *Egypt*, and that he returned from thence, is a fact with which the *Jews* to this day reproach our Saviour, as if he had learnt there the ſecret of working miracles.

That he confounded the Doctors at twelve years of age, is a fact of which the whole nation of the *Jews* were informed, becauſe it happened at one of thoſe three ſolemn feaſts which brought up the whole nation to *Jeruſalem*.

That Jeſus Chriſt was baptized by S. *John*, and that he received a moſt glorious teſtimony from him, is a fact of which all thoſe *Jews* whom the miniſtry of S. *John* had drawn to the river *Jordan* were witneſſes.

That Jeſus Chriſt choſe for his Apoſtles men without learning, and of the meaneſt of the people, that he lived with them three years and an half, preaching his doctrine, correcting the traditions of the *Jews*, working miracles, and foretelling things to come, are facts of which the whole people of the *Jews* were witneſſes, and all the *Romans* that were in *Judea* were fully informed of them; yea, they were known to all the world. The *Jews* could not be ignorant of them, who came up to *Jeruſalem* from all parts of the world to celebrate ten ſolemn feaſts according to the law, during the time in which theſe things were acting, and from thence carried the report of them into ſeveral parts of the world where they were diſpers'd.

It is evident alſo that Jeſus Chriſt laboured to perſwade men that he was the promiſed Meſſiah; this was the moſt conſiderable fact in the world to the *Jews*, and which had relation to the moſt important point of their religion, and touched them the neareſt: a fact which happened at a time when all were in expectation of the Meſſiah, as appears by the conſultation of *Herod*, when the *Jews*, who were oppreſſed by the *Romans*, did moſt earneſtly ſigh for his appearance; a fact confirm'd by publick oracles, and known to the whole nation, yea to the Heathen themſelves, for near three hundred years.

That Jeſus Chriſt, notwithſtanding all his miracles, was crucified at the purſuit of the *Jews*, and by the order of *Pontius Pilate*, is a fact of which the whole people of the *Jews* were witneſſes, becauſe it happened at the feaſt of the paſſover, that is, at a ſolemnity where the whole nation of the *Jews* was aſſembled; it is a fact which no Heathens ever went about to deny, they reproached the Chriſtians with it, who are ſo little aſham'd of it, that according to the orders of the ſame Jeſus, they celebrate the memorial of it in the ſacrament of the euchariſt.

That there was thick darkneſs over all the land at the crucifixion of Jeſus Chriſt from the third hour till the ſixth, that is, from nine of the clock till twelve, according to our way of computing the time, was a fact of that nature, that the whole nation of the *Jews* might eaſily have convinc'd the Apoſtles of this impoſture, if it had not been as confeſſed a truth as the darkneſs in *Egypt*, before the departure of the *Iſraelites*.

That Jeſus Chriſt was raiſed the third day, is a fact atteſted by a great number of witneſſes, the memorial whereof they celebrated every eighth

day as long as they liv'd, by a conſtant law, becauſe they conſidered this reſurrection as the ſeal of thoſe truths which Jeſus Chriſt had taught them. 'Tis a fact, the truth whereof they have maintained before magiſtrates, before the people, in all parts of the world. 'Tis a fact which they have publickly preached up, notwithſtanding all prohibitions which have been made: in ſhort, it is a fact which they have aſſerted in the midſt of the moſt cruel torments, and even until death.

That Jeſus Chriſt ſent down upon his Apoſtles the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, is a fact of which all *Jeruſalem* was a witneſs fifty days after the feaſt of the paſſover, when Jeſus Chriſt was crucified; it is as remarkable a fact as ever happened; twelve fiſhermen of *Galilee*, maintain in the face of the whole Jewiſh nation, that the ſame Jeſus whom the whole nation had demanded to be crucified but fifty days before, and who did actually ſuffer upon an infamous croſs, is riſen from the dead, and aſcended into heaven, after he had eaten and drunk with them, and had appeared ſeveral times to them after his reſurrection, and that he had given them the power of ſpeaking all ſorts of languages, and of healing all manner of diſeaſes.

That they ſpoke divers languages is a fact moſt notorious, the truth whereof appears from the converſion of the world, which was found to be fill'd with their Diſciples, but a few years after this fact was done.

That they had the power of healing all diſeaſes as well as their maſter, is a fact the truth whereof is eſtabliſh'd upon indiſputable teſtimonies, inſomuch as their ſucceſſors received the ſame gift by the laying on of their hands. Two hundred years after *Tertullian* mentions this gift, as being at that time well known amongſt Chriſtians.

That the Apoſtles, after they were rejected by the *Jews*, preached the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, who alſo received it, is a fact of which there are ſo many proofs in the world, that it cannot be called in queſtion.

That the converted *Jews* ſtrongly oppoſed themſelves againſt the preaching of the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, pretending, as the *Jews* now do, that the Meſſiah with his gifts and graces was confin'd to their nation, is a fact ſo well atteſted, that it cannot be called in queſtion, if we conſider the firſt diſpute, which gave occaſion to the firſt council of the Apoſtles, and to the conteſts of S. *Paul* with thoſe of his own nation.

That ſince that time the Apoſtles and their Diſciples have maintained by their writings and diſputes, and finally by their martyrdom, that Jeſus was the Meſſiah; that they have conſtantly ſtood to this claim, alledging the facts which the Goſpel propoſes, and maintaining that the matters there related were exact accompliſhments of the promiſes of God, and of the ancient prophecies: that all this is unqueſtionable, one needs only read their ſermons and ſpeeches ſet down by S. *Luke*, and their epiſtles; one needs only peruſe the Heathen hiſtory, and the works of thoſe that ſucceeded the Apoſtles, who followed their footſteps in eſtabliſhing the truth of the Chriſtian religion.

That the Apoſtles diſcharged their followers from the ceremonies which *Moſes* preſcribed, obliging them only to the eſſentials of morality: that they annul'd the law which permitted divorces without ſufficient cauſe, and polygamy; theſe are things which none, who have read their

their writings, or thoſe of their firſt Diſciples, can in the leaſt queſtion.

Laſtly, That they foretold many things, as well as their maſter; that they publiſhed their predictions, which they have extended to the end of the world, and the return of Jeſus from heaven to judge the world; and that they have recorded the particulars of many conſiderable events, obſerved by the Chriſtians, which have happened from time to time; theſe are facts as well known, and as inconteſtable, as any thing can be in the world of ſuch a nature. Whole nations are witneſſes of it, differing ſects, interpreters who have ſeveral opinions concerning theſe prophecies, the conteſts of the *Jews*, the oppoſition of Atheiſts, the cavils of Hereticks, the cruelty of tyrants, all theſe concur to prove clearly that the Chriſtians received theſe prophecies from the Apoſtles, as well as the truth of them, ſince even theſe oppoſitions were foretold as well as the perſecutions.

Thus I have given you a view of the greateſt part of the moſt important articles which are contained in the Chriſtian religion; and I think that they are ſo ſolidly grounded upon proofs of fact, that I can aſſert with reaſon, That no facts in the world can be produced, ſo well eſtabliſhed as theſe are, which are the fundamentals of our religion.

What facts are there which are atteſted by whole nations, as the miracles of Jeſus Chriſt were? What facts are there about which men were ſo careful to inform themſelves, as when a man pretends to the title of the Meſſiah? What thing can we ſuppoſe that requires a ſtronger conviction, becauſe of the difficulties it involves, than that of the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt? for thoſe who were eye-witneſſes of his crucifixion, that is, who had ſeen him puniſhed by the magiſtrate, the horrour of all his own people, and in all appearance forſaken of heaven.

To ſpeak the truth, as there cannot be a greater inſtance of fanatical folly, than to attribute to twelve poor fiſhermen, whoſe maſter was crucified at *Jeruſalem*, by publick order, and by an effect of the hatred of the whole nation, I ſay, to attribute to them the deſign of perſwading that people, and the *Gentiles* alſo, that this man was raiſed again from the dead, that he rules in heaven; that he has beſtowed upon them the miraculous gifts of ſpeaking all ſorts of languages, and healing all manner of diſeaſes; if this Jeſus had been never raiſed from the dead, nor had beſtowed ſuch gifts upon them, the mind of man not being capable of ſo great folly: ſo we have all the reaſon in the world to conclude, That ſince they have atteſted this fact, and confirm'd it by all the proofs which might convince thoſe, who tho' they were not prejudic'd, yet were aſtoniſh'd at the difficulty of the things themſelves, ſo that nothing can be more certain than facts ſo confirmed, as we pretend that theſe actually were.

CHAP. XVII.

CHAP. XVII.

That it cannot be queſtioned, whether the Books of the NEW TESTAMENT *were written by the Apoſtles.*

BEFORE we alledge thoſe arguments which will invincibly confirm the truth of the books of the *New Teſtament*, I deſire the reader to make theſe three or four reflexions, which ſeem to be very important to our preſent deſign.

The firſt is, That we can ſcarcely conceive a more ſimple and ſtrong way of proving a fact, than what we find in the books here mention'd. The deſign of the four Evangeliſts, for inſtance, is to prove that Jeſus, the ſon of *Mary*, is the promiſed Meſſiah, and that in his birth, his life, his doctrine, his death, and reſurrection, we meet with all the characters which the Prophets attributed to the Meſſiah. How do the Evangeliſts execute this their deſign? In the moſt proper way imaginable to convince others, and moſt proportionable to their deſign. They ſimply relate the facts; and facts ſo clear, that if we do not queſtion the truth of them, we cannot doubt that Jeſus is the Meſſiah. They relate the moſt important of theſe facts, as things that happened in the face of the whole nation of the *Jews*, as I have ſhewed in the precedent *chapter*: they relate them as facts for the moſt part owned by the *Jews*, from which the malice of the *Jews* extorted other conſequences: they give us an account of the judgment which the *Jews* made concerning the miracles that he wrought on the ſabbath day, upon the Diſciples gathering the ears of corn, of the anſwer which the *Jews* made to *Pilate*, *We have no other king but* Ceſar.

The ſecond is, That the Apoſtles ſuppoſing a general expectation of the Meſſiah, when Jeſus Chriſt appeared, ſhew that there was a very great knowledge of the prophecies that reſpected the Meſſiah, and a great impoſſibility of applying thoſe oracles to particular facts, if the truth of thoſe facts had not been beyond conteſt. Now we find very few oracles of which they did not make an application to the life and actions of our Saviour. Wee'l ſuppoſe the Apoſtles to have been men of great abilities, and who had long ſtudied the books of the Prophets, that they might tear out ſuch ſmall paſſages as they fancied might be applicable to Jeſus Chriſt; however it cannot be denied, that it does not appear by their writings that they had ſuch an exact knowledge of the prophecies, whence it might follow that they judged them to be applicable to Chriſt, by comparing them with the facts which they relate. 2. That they had this knowledge in common with the reſt of the *Jews*, who at this day apply the ſame texts to the Meſſiah, if they are not conſtrained by their clearneſs to wreſt them ſome other way.

The third reflexion is, That in the relation of theſe facts, they give us all the marks of an extraordinary ſincerity; they repreſent indeed whatſoever was for their maſter's glory; but they do as well relate thoſe things which ſeem to be ſhameful to his memory. They tell us of the Angels that aſſiſted at his birth, and at his death; but tell us withal,

That he was tempted of the Devil, and in all appearance forſaken by God at his death. They tell us, That the multitudes were reſolved to take him by force, and make him their king, as acknowledging him for the Meſſiah; and they tell us, That the ſame multitude ſome time after demanded him to be crucified.

The fourth is, That they repreſent very naturally all the judgments of the Synagogue againſt Jeſus: they repreſent him as excommunicated and crucified by them; they deſcribe the reports that were current among the *Jews*, That the Diſciples had taken away his body out of the ſepulchre; that the ſouldiers had depoſed the ſame in the forms of law before *Pilate*. From all which it appears that they were faithful hiſtorians, and not at all prepoſſeſſed, and that they uſed no invectives againſt the authors of theſe falſe reports, contenting themſelves to eſtabliſh the truth of the matter, by ſpecifying the places, the time, the witneſſes, and other circumſtances which are proper to eſtabliſh the truth of the facts they relate.

Theſe four reflexions being once ſuppoſed, I ſay, it is impoſſible to diſpute the truth of theſe books, or to call their authority in queſtion: to be convinc'd of which, one needs only conſider theſe two things; the firſt is, That the Apoſtles are the authors of the books which paſs under their names; the other is, That their faithfulneſs is not to be ſuſpected by us.

The former of theſe is ſo univerſally received, that nothing will be certain in matters of this nature, if this be queſtioned.

The four Evangeliſts have publiſhed their writings in populous cities, where they have been conſtantly read every Lord's day in Chriſtian aſſemblies, as S. *Juſtin Martyr* aſſures us in his apology, which was writ about the middle of the ſecond century.

The Apoſtles writ their epiſtles to numerous churches, to whom their hand, as well as the perſons by whom they ſent them, were well known. Can we inſtance in any writing in the world that hath been preſerved with the like careſulneſs? Let the *Jews* tell us what they pleaſe, concerning the care and faithfulneſs of their anceſtors to preſerve the books of the *Old Teſtament*, they can alledge nothing, but we can alledge the ſame in favour of the books of the *New Teſtament*. They tell us that *Moſes*, under the penalty of a curſe, had forbid the adding any thing thereto; and do not we read the ſame threatning in the laſt book of the *New Teſtament*? The philoſophers of each ſect, have nothing of this weight to alledge as an argument that the books which they aſcribe to their maſters are really theirs; we find only a few men in every age, who made it their buſineſs to ſtudy the books of the philoſophers, phyſicians, and lawyers; but ever ſince the Apoſtles there have been Chriſtians who made it their buſineſs to peruſe and preſerve their writings, as conſidering that they are the fountains of eternal life.

One may upon this occaſion take notice of two things which deſerve ſome attention: the one is, That the deſign of ſome Hereticks, as of *Marcion* for inſtance, to corrupt the copies of the writings of the *New Teſtament*, which were found in the hands of thoſe of his ſect, is a good argument to prove that they could not be corrupted. In ſhort, we find all the world oppoſed themſelves againſt this corruption, and confuted them

them by the agreement of all the other copies in the world which were exempt from this corruption.

The other is, That if there are ſome books whoſe authority was doubtful for ſome time, by thoſe who otherwiſe were accounted othodox, yet this cannot juſtly prejudice the truth of the *New Teſtament*; the reaſon is, becauſe this happened only to ſome few epiſtles which were written, not to particular churches, but to whole nations. And indeed it is plain from common ſenſe, that when writings are ſent to whole bodies (as the epiſtle of S. *Jude*) without communicating the copy to particular men, that they may with more juſtice be ſuſpected, than thoſe whoſe hand was known by many, and particularly by thoſe to whom the epiſtles were ſent.

Moreover, the account which the ancient fathers of the church give us of the uncertainties of this nature, ſufficiently ſhew that they were very careful in examining theſe things; and when at any time ſome particular men did not uſe care enough in examining theſe books, as it once happened in the church of *Roſs* (*a*), where a book which was falſly attributed to S. *Peter* was preſerved, ſuppoſing it to have been his, the other churches not conſenting to it, that abuſe was ſoon remedied, the writings abolished, that there is ſcarce a weak remembrance left of them.

One ſee's that theſe remarks are ſufficient to aſſure us that the Apoſtles are the authors of thoſe books which bear their names: and if this way of confirming a matter of this nature, be accounted good and ſolid, when we ſpeak of the books of *Ariſtotle* or *Hippocrates*, it muſt be infinitely ſtronger when it is applyed to the writings of the Apoſtles.

In ſhort, theſe books were written to be read by perſons of the meaneſt capacities, by women, by children as well as by Doctors: and they treat of matters of which the whole world hath reaſon to be informed. If ſome *Jews* ſuffer'd martyrdom under *Antiochus*, to preſerve the books of the *Old Teſtament*, we have like examples, and as numerous, of thoſe who have done as much for the preſervation of the books of the *New Teſtament*. Laſtly, if the *Jews* have looked upon thoſe as traitors and apoſtates, who gave up thoſe books to the fury of their perſecutors, the Chriſtians have teſtified no leſs averſion for thoſe who delivered the books of the Apoſtles to the fury of Heathens, even to the ſubjecting of them to the utmoſt rigour of Eccleſiaſtical diſcipline, in the third century and before.

(*a*) *Euſeb.* lib. vi. cap. 12.

CHAP. XVIII.

CHAP. XVIII.

That one cannot doubt of the Faithfulneſs of the Witneſs of the Apoſtles concerning thoſe Facts which they relate.

NEITHER is it more difficult to eſtabliſh this ſecond truth, That the faithfulneſs of the Apoſtles cannot be reaſonably queſtioned.

To be convinc'd of this, one needs only conſider the character of the Apoſtles, the character of their writings, of their ſermons, of their ſufferings, and of their martyrdom, and laſt of all the character of thoſe amongſt whom they wrote theſe things, and preached them to their death.

As to their ſermons; the Apoſtles were contemporaries with Jeſus Chriſt; they ſpoke of things which they had ſeen, and diſtinguiſhed them carefully from thoſe which they had learnt another way. They were honeſt men, ſimple and without learning, very fit to bear witneſs in matters of fact. They were perſons that preached nothing but love, and the ſtudy of truth; they proteſted in the midſt of their ſufferings, that they could not conceal the things which they had ſeen and heard; they are men without covetouſneſs or ambition; they forſake all that they poſſeſs in the world; S. *Matthew* leaves his houſe and goods to follow Jeſus Chriſt. Their epiſtles ſpeak nothing more than inſtances of Chriſtian poverty, of the loſs of their goods, and of mighty inſtances of their charity.

Theſe witneſſes are ſufficiently numerous, they preach and write in ſeveral places, and yet they agree admirably in their relations of the ſame facts; it appears they had ſuch lively and diſtinct impreſſions, that they frequently make uſe of the very ſame words. The difference which is found in ſome part of their books, is a manifeſt argument that nothing but the force of the matter made them agree in their relations.

And indeed, how is it otherwiſe conceivable that four ſuch authors as the Evangeliſts, ſhould agree about ſo many opinions, ſo many miracles, ſo many prophecies, ſo many diſputes, and in a word, about ſo many matters of fact: ſhall we ſay that the ſecond took his copy from the firſt, the third from the ſecond, *&c.*? This appears to be evidently falſe by peruſing of their works, and by the difference of their ſtile.

And certainly there appears ſo great ingenuity in their writings, that we cannot accuſe them of having had a deſign to deceive the world; they tell you plainly of the meanneſs of their condition and original; they ſincerely diſcover their own weakneſſes, their ambition, their vanity, their diſputes, their heats, their murmurings. S. *Matthew* tells us that he was a publican, that is a ſervant of the *Roman* power, whom the *Jews* look'd upon as an excommunicated perſon, and as an enemy of their own nation. He relates the ridiculous pretenſion of the ſons of *Zebedee*, founded on the carnal notion of their mother concerning the temporal kingdom of the Meſſiah. They ſet down S. *Peter*'s denying of his maſter; they do not diſſemble their common ignorance, which made them

them expect a temporal king in Jesus Christ; they frankly publish their own incredulity, when *Mary Magdalen* brought them the news of our Saviour's resurrection; and they describe the obstinate resistance of S. *Thomas* about this matter, against the unanimous testimony of all his companions.

They do not content themselves with saying in general that some illustrious facts have happened; but they punctually set down all the circumstances, so that it clearly appears their design was to have their writings examined, and that after an exact search men might acquiesce in the conclusions which they draw from thence. For instance, they do not tell us that Jesus Christ raised a great many from the dead, they only tell us of three, describing the circumstances of their resurrection, the time, the place, the age, the persons, the assistants, and all these, with other particulars, which impostors care not to enter upon, lest they should contradict themselves, or be easily confuted.

I have already shewn, That the nature of the things themselves which the Disciples of Jesus Christ have written, is such as will not permit us to accuse them of having had a design to impose upon the world; they are facts, and not discourses, which are left upon record; and facts relating to the most important matter in the world, than which none was ever more throughly examined; they are facts which are linked so closely, and which have so strict a dependance one upon the other, and so interwoven with the most publick transactions, either in civil or religious affairs, that it was impossible for them to form the design of such an imposture.

In short, it is very remarkable, that these facts were publickly known to the kings of *Judea*, to the *Roman* magistrate, to the principal ministers of state, and of their religion, and to the whole nation of the *Jews* assembled ten several times at their solemn feasts; to the several sects of the Jewish religion, the *Pharisees*, *Sadducees*, and *Essens*, who are attack'd, censured, and confuted in these books.

One ought to consider, after all, that the Apostles at first preached and wrote in *Judea*, where were the witnesses of those miracles which they related, the impotent, the blind, the deaf, which Jesus Christ had restored, the dead whom he raised, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* whom he censured, the *Sadducees* whom he confuted, the auditors who had heard him preach, the towns wherein he had conversed most familiarly, the same people that followed him, the same enemies that conspired his death, the same judges, and the same authority which condemned him to death.

S. *Luke* in the relation he gives us of the speeches and apologies which the Apostles made before kings, before the great council of the *Jews*, and in the midst of their synagogues, brings them in speaking of the facts contained in the Gospel, as of matters publickly known and attested by a vast number of witnesses. Thus S. *Peter* speaks of them in the tenth of the *Acts*, and the other sacred writers spake of them in the same manner in their epistles.

Here is a new character which we ought carefully to observe: we find no temporal interest which obliged the Disciples to adhere to Jesus Christ; and we find yet less reason to suppose, if Jesus Christ had not been raised

from

from the dead, and they had not ſeen him after his death, that they ſhould have had any concern for his glory; they would certainly have condemned and anathematiz'd him as an impoſtor, who by means of ſome falſe miracles, and an affected holineſs, had abuſed them. Whereas indeed we find that they defended the glory of Jeſus Chriſt with ſo much heat, and that with ſo conſtant a teſtimony to his reſurrection, that they expoſed themſelves to all manner of reproaches, to all ſorts of puniſhment, and moſt cruel deaths, to confirm the belief of that fact. They deſpiſe the *anathema*'s of the *Jewiſh* ſynagogue, they contemn their publick obloquies, they value not the hatred of their whole nation. They preach this crucified perſon in *Judea*, they preach him alſo in other countries, that he might be equally adored by *Jews* and *Heathens*. They leave their employments to follow this *Jeſus*, and after they had accompanied him three years, they depart from *Judea* to go and confound the idolatry of the world, and within *Rome* it ſelf to decry the gods they worſhipt, obliging them to acknowledge, him whom the men of *Jeruſalem* had crucified, for their God; him, who had been the deteſtation of the *Jews*: him, whom the *Roman* magiſtrate had given up to their fury, in making him undergo the puniſhment appointed for ſlaves.

Laſtly, one ought to obſerve it as a thing of great weight in this whole queſtion, That this teſtimony of the Apoſtles which is ſo uniform, ſo ſolemn, ſo well confirmed by all manner of means, and ſealed with their deaths, is not conteſted or contradicted by any hiſtorian of that time: there was nothing more eaſie, either for *Jews* or *Gentiles*, than to convince the world of the falſhood of the facts related in the Goſpel; they had the books of the Apoſtles in their hands, they were maſters of the publick records; it was a matter of general concernment to the *Jews*, to oppoſe themſelves to an impoſture of ſo terrible a conſequence as the hiſtory of the Evangeliſts was, if it had been entirely falſe; neither was it leſs the intereſt of the *Romans* to expoſe a ſect, of whom *Pliny* the younger tells us, that all ſorts of people joyned with them, tho' they were perſecuted with incredible violence. In the mean time we find no body that hath contradicted the relation of the Apoſtles, nor any author that has writ againſt Jeſus Chriſt or his Apoſtles. A long time after indeed there was a book ſeen, call'd *The Acts of* Pilate, publiſhed by the order of the emperour *Maximian*, which endeavoured to overthrow the truth of the facts that are related in the Goſpels; but thoſe acts are contradicted by all the Heathen hiſtorians yet remaining that were contemporary with the Apoſtles. Finally, a vaſt number of *Jews* and *Gentiles* were immediately convinced by the authority of the Apoſtles, and a belief in the Goſpel hath paſſed from *Judea* to the ends of the world, according to the predictions which God gave by the miniſtry of the Prophets, and by the mouth of our Saviour.

CHAP. XIX.

CHAP. XIX.

More Reaſons to manifeſt the Faithfulneſs of the Apoſtles.

WHAT I have already alledged might be ſufficient to eſtabliſh the faithfulneſs of the Apoſtles, but for a fuller conviction of the reader concerning ſo weighty a truth of our religion, I ſhall ſuperadd ſome few more reflexions.

Firſt of all, It cannot be deny'd that the form of the writings of the *New Teſtament*, is vaſtly different from thoſe which may be ſuſpected as forgeries. When the four Evangeliſts had related the miraculous birth of *John the Baptiſt*, they next ſet down that of our Saviour Chriſt, with the actions of his life, until his death, which does not comprehend above four or five years.

S. *Luke* writes the hiſtory of the Apoſtles, and in particular that of S. *Paul*, and takes in only the ſpace of about thirty years: now let any one judge whether they who confine themſelves to ſo narrow limits in reſpect of time, place, and perſons, have any deſign to impoſe.

The remainder of theſe books is compoſed of two ſorts of writings, one epiſtolary, and the other prophetical: for the prophetical parts, time muſt prove the truth of the predictions which are contained in the *Apocalyps*, as well as of thoſe which are found in ſome of the epiſtles of the Apoſtles.

As for the epiſtles, beſides ſome moral inſtructions, they are almoſt all employ'd in deciding ſome queſtions, which the calling of the *Gentiles* to the Goſpel, and the aboliſhing of the ceremonial law had raiſed in the minds of the *Jews*, who were converted to Chriſtianity. We know that of all writings, epiſtles are the moſt certain monuments, and thoſe which men endeavour to forge leaſt.

After all, It is certain that the ſacred writers have with great care ſet down the time in which every event happened, as well according to the ſtile of the *Jews*, in pointing out to us their ſolemn feaſts, as that of the *Gentiles*, by ſetting down the year of the *Roman* emperour, and the character of the *Roman* magiſtrates.

A ſecond character which hinders us from accuſing theſe books as forgeries, is this, That we cannot deny but that theſe books are of a very particular nature; they contain ſeveral conſiderable oracles which were to be fulfilled in the ſame generation, as that of the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; they contain a continued ſeries of miracles, of which all *Judea* was witneſs; they contain a great number of ſermons, preached upon ſeveral illuſtrious occaſions in the ſynagogues, in the temple of *Jeruſalem*, and before thouſands of people in the wilderneſs. Let any one judge whether it would be an eaſie thing to make theſe writings to be received, if we ſhould ſuppoſe them to be lately forged.

This third reflexion is alſo conſiderable: it is certain that the Goſpel was preached in the greateſt cities of the empire, by the Apoſtles, and the Diſciples of Jeſus: the hiſtory of the Apoſtles, and their epiſtles themſelves make it evident, that there were numerous churches at *Rome*, *Corinth*,

Corinth, *Theſſalonica*, *Philippi*, *Epheſus*, *Antioch*, and ſeveral other famous places: it is alſo known that there were *Jewiſh* ſynagogues in the ſame places; now if this be the caſe, what poſſibility is there of ſuſpecting the leaſt impoſture in the books of the Apoſtles, if we conſider how they were drawn up? The Diſciples of Chriſt did not only preach in the ſynagogues the ſame things which they have put in writing, but they alſo engaged the *Jews* to examine them, becauſe they affirmed them with a conſtancy which the *Jews* could not but look upon as incredible obſtinacy: firſt of all, That theſe were things beyond diſpute, and could not be doubted of. Secondly, That they had been long ſince foretold by the Prophets. Thirdly, That they were an exact accompliſhment of other prophecies which had relation to the promiſed Meſſiah. Fourthly, That ſeeing they could not queſtion the facts contained in the Goſpel, they ought to renounce Judaiſm, to receive baptiſm and become Chriſtians.

'Tis alſo of great importance to obſerve further, as I have already done, that the books of the *New Teſtament* were penn'd before the overthrow of the commonwealth of the *Jews*. There are only ſome of the works of S. *John*, which were writ after the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. I have before obſerved that the Divine Providence order'd it ſo, that all the *Jews* for five and thirty years together, repairing thrice a year to *Jeruſalem* at their three ſolemn feſtivals, might have greater opportunities to inform themſelves of the truth of the facts contained in the Goſpels, and the Acts of the Apoſtles.

To this remark I ſhall now add two weighty conſiderations; the one is, That the Chriſtians for ſome years ſubmitted themſelves to the ceremonial law, and repaired with the *Jews* to *Jeruſalem*, and by this means were engaged to examine the facts contained in the Goſpel. The other is, That after the council of *Jeruſalem*, they were diſpenſed with as to that cuſtom, as well as the obſerving of all the other parts of the ceremonial law, which ſet the Chriſtians in a greater oppoſition to the *Jews*, and ſo encreaſed the neceſſity of examining very ſcrupulouſly on both ſides, whatſoever was for or againſt them in thoſe matters of religion.

This obſervation leads us naturally to another, That it is abſolutely impoſſible that an impoſture of this nature ſhould not be diſcovered, when there ariſeth a difference between thoſe, who may be looked upon as the authors of the forgery, and thoſe who after them endeavoured to gain credit to it. Now if we find that one Diſciple of Jeſus Chriſt betrays him, without accuſing him of the leaſt crime or impoſture; if we have ſeen the Chriſtians at firſt united in the ſame aſſemblies with the *Jews*; and that there were ſeveral conteſts and diſputes between the Apoſtles and thoſe firſt Chriſtians, yet without calling thoſe facts which are continued in the Goſpel, in queſtion by either ſide: S. *Paul* takes notice of the conteſts which happened betwixt him and S. *Peter*; S. *Luke* relates the heats between S. *Paul* and *Barnabas*, upon very ſlight occaſions, he ſets down alſo the diſpute which aroſe about the diſtribution of alms to the *Greek* and *Jewiſh* widows: one ſee's that there aroſe a diſpute amongſt tne Apoſtles themſelves, about the calling of the *Gentiles* to the Goſpel; one ſee's afterwards the obſtinacy of ſome of the *Jews*

of the ſect of the *Phariſees*, who maintained the abſolute neceſſity of ſubmitting to circumciſion, and S. *Paul*'s oppoſition ſet down in his epiſtle to the *Galatians*. We need no more to make it evident, that there could be no concert nor colluſion between them, to deceive or impoſe upon thoſe to whom they preached the Goſpel.

Let us go a little further; a diſpute happens about a capital point of Chriſtian religion, about the reſurrection; inſomuch that S. *Paul* thinks himſelf obliged to write concerning it to the *Corinthians*, ſo that there was a neceſſity of examining the truth of the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt again.

Now we find that S. *Paul* to confirm this doctrine in general, chiefly makes uſe of the inſtance of the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, which he proves by arguments taken from the fact it ſelf, that is, by witneſſes whom he produceth. Whereupon I make this conſiderable reflexion, That in comparing this diſpute of S. *Paul* with the writings of the Evangeliſts, it clearly appears that they did not alledge all the proofs they might have done. None of them relates in particular the number of thoſe who ſaw Jeſus Chriſt in *Galilee* upon the holy mountain; but S. *Paul*, who had examined the faithfulneſs of their relations, and knew the witneſſes, ſpecifies the number, and obſerves that many of them were yet alive, if perhaps any of them were already dead.

I ſhall add only two conſiderations more, which prove that it was even impoſſible for the Apoſtles to impoſe upon the world on this occaſion. The firſt is taken from their ſtate and condition. They are no great lords, whoſe power might terrifie any one from examining their writings; or whoſe reputation could not have been called in queſtion without danger: on the contrary, they were men of mean condition, employ'd in baſe profeſſions, often caſt into priſons, and from time to time oblig'd to appear before magiſtrates for the ſame doctrine and the ſame facts which they publiſhed to the world. Let us conſider then whether it were an eaſie matter for S. *Paul* for inſtance, I ſay for this S. *Paul*, a maker of tents, this S. *Paul* without reputation, without riches; this S. *Paul* who was ſeized at *Jeruſalem* after divers perſecutions, this S. *Paul* who was ſent a priſoner to *Rome*, and impriſoned there under the power of the *Roman* magiſtrate, and who at laſt loſt his life by *Nero*'s order, to make thoſe blindly believe all he ſaid, who were at liberty to examine, whether all that *Luke* related as happening to him at *Jeruſalem*, at *Maltha*, at *Philippi*, at *Athens*, were indeed true, or only a framed ſtory.

The ſecond thing we ought to obſerve is, That not only the books of the Apoſtles were publickly read every Lord's day, by a conſtant law, of which we have moſt authentick witneſſes, in the writings of the Apoſtles themſelves, and in other ancient books, which are ſtill extant; but alſo that they were all of them written, not in *Hebrew*, which at that time was a dead tongue; nor in *Syriack*, a language ſpoken in very few places; but in *Greek*, which at that time was the language commonly received throughout all the *Roman* empire; and beſides, was the language into which the Divine Providence had cauſed the *Old Teſtament* to be tranſlated about three ages before, that men might compare the ancient oracles and their accompliſhment together.

CHAP. XX.

CHAP. XX.

That the whole Model of the Religion and Commonwealth of the Jews *is at this Day ſo entirely deſtroyed, that the* Messiah *could no more be known.*

WHAT I have before ſet down to eſtabliſh the truth of thoſe facts which ſerve for a foundation to the Chriſtian religion, is certainly ſufficient to anſwer the deſign which I formed in writing theſe reflexions upon the books of the holy Scripture; and I believe I may with juſtice conclude, That as nothing is more unconteſtable than the truth of thoſe books and of the facts in them related; ſo there is nothing more certain than the truth and divinity of the Chriſtian religion. So that now I have only two things to do, with which I conceive it will be neceſſary to conclude theſe reflexions: The one is, to ſhew the abſolute impoſſibility of conceiving any other accompliſhment of the ancient oracles than what is ſet down in the Goſpel: The other is, that concerning the diviſions amongſt Chriſtians, which are a ſcandal to the *Jews*, and eſpecially concerning the difficulty of the myſteries which the Goſpel propoſes, which are as ſo many ſtumbling blocks to them which hinder them from diſcerning thoſe characters of truth in the Goſpel, which by the fulfilling of the ancient oracles, appear therein with ſo much luſtre. The former of theſe ſhall be the ſubject of this, and the latter of the next chapter.

As the pulling down of the ſcaffolds which were only ſet up to build a palace, is an infallible ſign that the building is finiſhed, ſo one may ſay, that the total defacing of the model, which God had formed in the law, that the Meſſiah at his coming might be certainly known, is an unanſwerable proof that he is already come. It is worth our pains to make ſome reflexions on this overthrow, that we may conclude againſt the *Jews*, that if the Meſſiah was yet to appear in the world, it would be impoſſible to know him, according to the characters which God had given of him before his appearing.

In the firſt place therefore, whereas God had confined the *Jews* to the land of *Canaan*, that they might be viſible to all the poſterity of *Noah*, of whom one part, that is, the off-ſpring of *Cham*, poſſeſſed *Egypt* and *Africa*; the poſterity of *Japhet*, *Europe* and the leſſer *Aſia*; and thoſe of *Shem* the reſt of *Aſia*; the *Jews* at preſent are driven from that country, and far from being reſtored to it after ſeventy years, as they were by *Cyrus*; they have been for ever baniſhed thence, by a decree of the emperour *Adrian*, who forbad them ſo much as to turn their eyes towards *Judea*, which was in the year of Chriſt 135. The Heathen *Celſus* inſults over them in theſe remarkable words, *They have no more*, ſaith he, *either land or houſe remaining to them.*

Secondly, ſo far were they from having any remainders of a temporal power, that they were then wholly deprived of it. See what *Tertullian*

ſaith of them in the year of our Saviour 204. (*b*). *They wander up and down the world like deſperſed vagabonds, baniſhed from their climate and country, without man, without God for their king, and are not permitted, as ſtrangers, to ſet foot on their native ſoil.* We read a decree of *Honorus* the emperour, which deprives them of the right of nominating their patriarchs, or of paying them any tribute; which ſhews that their authority was wholly extinct.

Thirdly, Their temple at *Jeruſalem* being deſtroyed in the ſeventieth year of our Lord, as that in *Egypt* called *Onion* was the year following, it could never be built again, notwithſtanding that *Julian* the apoſtate, out of his hatred to the Chriſtians, favoured that enterpriſe in the year of our Saviour 363. There is a letter ſtill extant which *Julian* writ to the *Jews*, to aſſure them of his protection, and to encourage them to that work; but it was not ſo much his death which daſhed that undertaking, as a very memorable oppoſition from Heaven.

Marcellinus a Heathen gives us this account of it (*c*). *And being deſirous to propagate the memory of his government by the greatneſs of his works, he with vaſt expence deſigned to rebuild the ſplendid temple which was formerly at* Jeruſalem, *which after many and bloody battels, being beſieged by* Veſpaſian, *and afterwards by* Titus, *was at laſt taken with difficulty: he committed the care of haſtning the buſineſs to* Alypius *of* Antioch, *who had formerly been Pro-præfect of* Britain. *As therefore this* Alypius *was vigorouſly proſecuting the work, being aſſiſted by the Lieutenant of the Province, terrible balls of fire frequently breaking forth near the foundations, ſometimes burnt the workmen, and made the place inacceſſible: thus the deſign was laid aſide, the element it ſelf beating them back on purpoſe.* *Julian* eaſily apprehended that their religion would periſh, and that it could never be reſtored without the temple.

In the fourth place, the obſervation of ſome of their laws was abſolutely forbidden, as being contrary to thoſe of the *Roman* empire. Thus they were not ſuffered to have many wives.

Upon this overthrow many inconveniencies followed, which it will be convenient to repreſent at one view.

1. They no longer know thoſe perſons who at the firſt diviſion of the land by *Joſhua*, were owners of the different parts of the land of *Canaan*.

2. Their families and tribes are confounded; their jubilee, which could not be kept but in the land of *Canaan*, and which obliged them to ſtudy their genealogies, having ceaſed long ſince.

3. The

(*b*) *Differſi, jalabundi, & exuli, & ſolo ſui exortes, vagantur per orbem, ſine homine, ſine Deo rege, quibus nec adorandum jure terram patriam ſalutis veſtigia, ſaltare interdictum.* Apolog. cap. 21.

(*c*) Lib. 23. *Imperium ſuo moderamini magnitudine operum geſtiens propagare, ambitioſum quidem, apud Hieroſolymam templum quod ſub multo & intermino certamine, obſidente Veſpaſiano poſtea, Tito ægre expugnatum, inſtaurare ſumptibus cogitabat immodicis: negotiumque maturandum Alypio dederat Antiochenſi, qui olim Britannias curaverat Pro-præfectis. Cumque is vi ipſa fortiter inſtaret Alypius, juvaretque provinciæ Rector, metuendi globi flammarum prope fundamenta crebris aſſultibus erumpentes, fecere locum exuſtis aliquoties operatibus inacceſſum: hocque modo elemento deſtinatius repellente, ceſſavit inceptum.*

3. The family of *David* is at this day utterly unknown.

4. They have no more lawful prieſts to obſerve the primogeniture, to examine the tokens of virginity, tho' it appears, that according to God's deſign, theſe laws were given on purpoſe to aſcertain the knowledge of the Meſſiah, and to be like incloſures about this important truth, in the compaſs of which it might be the better examined.

Certainly if the *Jews* were ſtill in poſſeſſion of *Judea*, if they had their kings of the tribe of *Judah*, if they had their prieſts, if they were aſſured of their genealogies, if they ſtill enjoyed all the other neceſſary means for eſtabliſhing the certainty of their deſcents, if their temple had ſtill ſubſiſted in its former luſtre, and that the ſacrifices appointed by the laws were ſtill offered there: the *Jews* might boldly anſwer, that the *Shiloh* was not yet come, that is, they ought not to deſpair of ſeeing the Meſſiah born at *Bethlehem*, of the ſeed of *David*, and entring the temple of *Jeruſalem*. Then the prophecy of *Daniel*, which determines 490 years for the term in which the Meſſiah was to appear, and be cut off by a violent death and puniſhment, would ſeem to be eluded.

But the term of the Meſſiah's coming is paſt, the commonwealth of the *Jews* is overturned, the temple of *Jeruſalem* is deſtroyed 1600 years ſince; there are no more genealogies among the *Jews*, they do not know their tribes, much leſs their families: how then can it be ſuppoſed that God ſhould be true in his oracles (as we muſt acknowledge him to be) if they were never anſwered by the event.

To ſpeak the truth, it is impoſſible to conſider the arguments we have alledged to prove that Jeſus Chriſt is the Meſſiah, and eſpecially thoſe demonſtrations which the Apoſtles have given us, without acknowledging theſe two things:

The firſt is, That it was very eaſie at the time of Jeſus Chriſt's appearing, to examine whether he who declared himſelf to be the Meſſiah, were ſo indeed; ſo it is abſolutely impoſſible to examine it, or know it, ſince the deſtruction of that model, if we ſuppoſe that God at firſt framed it, for the determining of this queſtion, as we have no reaſon to doubt it.

The ſecond is, That the Chriſtians exactly followed this Divine model, and being convinced of the truth of the facts which exactly correſponded with it, and which anſwered it in all its parts, they had all the reaſon imaginable to believe that Jeſus Chriſt was the Meſſiah.

In ſhort, if we conſider it well, we ſhall find that the whole Chriſtian religion is nothing but a queſtion of fact between the *Jews* and *Chriſtians*: but ſuch a queſtion as the *Jews* at preſent are not in a condition to maintain againſt the Chriſtians.

Both *Jews* and Chriſtians agree in the characters of the Meſſiah, or at leaſt about the moſt of them. According to theſe characters the Meſſiah ought to be come: the Chriſtians maintain that they may be found in Jeſus Chriſt, and they prove it by matter of fact; wherefore we muſt conclude, That either theſe characters attributed to the Meſſiah, are not proper characters to know him by, and ſo the wiſdom of God will be eluded, and both *Jews* and Chriſtians equally deceived, in taking that for a character of the Meſſiah which is not; or elſe that both the Meſſiah

siah is certainly come, and that he is no other than that Jesus whom we worship.

CHAP. XXI.

That the Greatness of the Mysteries of the Christian Religion; and the Division which is amongst Christians, cannot be any Prejudice to the Proofs of the Truth of the Christian Religion.

I COME now to examine the double stumbling block which the *Jews* pretend against the Christian religion. *This religion*, say they, *propounds doctrines that are inconceivable, and contrary to reason: for instance, that of the Trinity, that of the Incarnation and the Divinity of the Messiah.* These are the doctrines which the *Jews* reject, as absolutely incompatible with the books of the *Old Testament*, which we have received from their hands.

But it is an easie matter to answer this objection; 1. It is founded upon a total forgetfulness of the solidity of those proofs of fact, which I have alledged. Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, this is a fact confirmed by several witnesses. It appears from *Tacitus*, that Jesus Christ suffered death under *Tiberius*, *Pontius Pilate* being governour of *Judea*. It is known that *Claudius* banished the Christians from *Rome*, in the year of our Lord 54. It is evident from *Tacitus*, in his life of *Nero*, that he accused the Christians of burning the city of *Rome*, which himself was the author of; the Christians therefore made a considerable body in the capital city of the empire, and this happened in the year of our Lord 64. *Suetonius* says the same thing. 2. It appears that *Pliny*, in *Trajan*'s time, takes notice of the manner of their meetings. 3. *Dion Cassius* sets down the accusation brought in against *Flavius* and *Domitilla*, as against Atheists; which is the title *Julian* the apostate gives to *Constantine*, because the Christians rejected the worship of the Heathen gods. 4. It appears by the latter end of the *Acts of the Apostles* that this book was writ in the year of our Lord 63, and yet this book supposes the Gospel of S. *Luke* to have been written before it, and S. *Luke*'s Gospel takes it for granted, that some of the other Gospels were already published. 5. It appears from the writings of *Clemens Romanus*, that the epistle to the *Hebrews* was then written, and the same may be gathered from the books of S. *Ignatius*, *Polycarp*, and S. *Justin*. These facts which are certain, are sufficient to prove that immediately after the death of Jesus Christ, his Apostles, and their Disciples, as eye-witnesses, maintained the truth of his resurrection. After this it may indeed be disputed, by what power he was raised, whether by a Divine power, or by his own; but it is ridiculous to dispute the fact by reasonings drawn from pretended absurdities which one may think to find in the doctrines of the *Gospel*.

Secondly, These mysteries, as for instance, that of the Trinity, relates

lates to the Divine nature, which is incomprehenſible, ſo that it is no ſtrange thing if an idea of it be propoſed to us, which not being diſtinctly known by us, may raiſe difficulties and perplexities in our minds. If I would diſcourſe with one born blind, of the ſun, of its light and heat, and ſhould attribute to the ſun the production of light, and afterwards of heat, he would find an infinite trouble not to imagine three ſuns. It is known how the philoſophers, who agreed about the unity of the ſoul, have notwithſtanding been obliged to attribute ſeveral faculties to it, which the common people look upon as very different things, and which ſeem to oppoſe the idea's of its unity and ſimplicity.

In the third place, The Chriſtians prove very ſolidly, that theſe myſteries have been clearly propoſed by the Apoſtles, who received their light from heaven as to theſe truths, and ſo might neceſſarily be believed upon their word, for the ſame reaſon that the Prophets of the *Old Teſtament* were formerly believed.

Moreover, they aſſert that theſe doctrines were firſt expreſſed, tho' not ſo clearly, in the *Old Teſtament*, which is in the hands of the *Jews*, the mortal enemies of Chriſtians.

I add to theſe remarks, that moſt of thoſe facts whoſe truth is ſo invincibly eſtabliſhed, ſuppoſe theſe doctrines; and that the whole frame of the religion doth ſo neceſſarily require them, that we rob it of a conſiderable part of its glory in queſtioning or conteſting any of them.

Theſe reflexions may ſuffice in general to reſolve this difficulty of the *Jews*; and for a more particular ſatisfaction, we refer the reader to thoſe books which purpoſely treat of theſe myſteries, deſiring him to obſerve carefully, that commonly the moſt difficult objections of Hereticks againſt theſe matters, do rather oppoſe the terms which are made uſe of, or the notions which men follow in ſpeaking of theſe truths, than the propoſitions contained in the writings of the *New Teſtament*.

At leaſt one may be aſſured, that the *Jews* are conſtrained to reſolve ſeveral parallel objections, to which one can ſcarcely give a ſatisfactory anſwer, without borrowing ſome diſtinctions and notions from the Chriſtians.

Neither can the ſecond objection of the *Jews* give us any more diſturbance. It is true that there have been diviſions amongſt Chriſtians, and are ſtill to this day; What can we conclude thence? Can we reaſonably conclude that therefore the firſt founders of Chriſtianity were doubtful concerning the truth of thoſe facts which are the ſupport and foundation of it.

On the contrary, upon an attentive obſervation one may find,

1. That hereſies have only ſerved to render the truth of theſe facts more inconteſtable, by obliging thoſe that had conſider'd of them, to examine their certainty with more care and application. This is the judgment one ought to make upon all thoſe hereſies in the ſecond age, about the truth of the fleſh of Jeſus Chriſt, or about the truth of his death: from thence men took occaſion to take notice of, and collect with great care all the circumſtances that prove the truth of both theſe facts.

2. We find that the greateſt part of theſe conteſts do not concern the truth of the facts, but the ſeveral conſequences drawn from them, the truth of thoſe matters continuing ſtill beyond diſpute. This we find in

the diſpute raiſed about the *millenium*, the truth of the promiſes of Jeſus Chriſt being equally believed by both the diſputing parties; but differently underſtood, according to the temper of thoſe that conſider'd of them; ſome forming groſs and ſenſual conceptions concerning them; others having a more ſpiritual reliſh, which they had acquired by ſtudying the prophecies, and their true ſenſe.

3. We find that this diviſion which hath ſprung up amongſt Chriſtians, is one of the moſt ſolid proofs of the truth of the books of the *New Teſtament*. If ſome fools have endeavoured to decry ſome of them, or to falſifie ſome particular places, we ſee that both parties unite to repel that violence, by producing their copies, and beating back the impoſtors with their united ſtrength. One ſee's that *Tertullian*, tho' a *Montaniſt*, writ preſcriptions againſt Hereticks; and *Epiphanius* takes notice (without any reſpect to ſome that were orthodox) of their crime in blotting out of their copies, that Chriſt had wept.

It is known that the diviſion of the *Jews* into *Karaites* and *Thalmudiſts*, the jealouſie between the *Jews* and *Samaritans*, and the diviſion between the *Jews* and *Chriſtians*, is a means of preſerving the Scripture, and hindering its corruption, each party being very vigilant to hinder their adverſaries from attempting any thing to its prejudice, in corrupting a book which they conſider as common to them all.

I might obſerve many other advantages which accrew to the truth from theſe human failings; but I will only inſtance in one, which has always ſeem'd to me very conſiderable; and that is, That theſe Hereticks diſtinctly prove the truth of the predictions of our Saviour. An impious perſon would have reaſon to accuſe our oracles as falſe, if there had never been any hereſies. But truth triumphs in ſeeing ſo great a multitude of them, who the more they encreaſe, the more ſhe ſee's her ſelf confirm'd and eſtabliſhed. This is the reaſon induced God to permit ſo great an increaſe in the firſt ages, when the truth, meeting with the greateſt oppoſition by perſecutions, ſtood in the greateſt need of ſenſible characters, by which it might be known.

I conclude this work with deſiring my reader to conſider theſe reflexions upon the holy Scripture here propounded, with a ſerious attention, and to examine the coherence and indiſſoluble connexion of them; and with prayer to God that it may pleaſe him to make them ſerviceable to advance the glory of his Name, which is the only end I have propoſed to myſelf in the writing of them



END OF VOLUME FIRST.